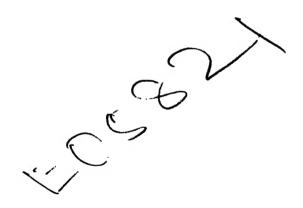
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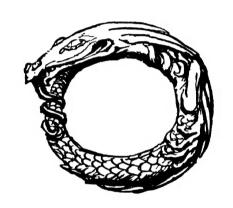
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THE RING OF THE NIBLUNG A TRILOGY WITH A PRELUDE BY RICHARD WAGNER

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
MARGARET ARMOUR



PRELUDE: THE RHINEGOLD FIRST DAY OF THE TRILOGY: THE VALKYRIE

SECOND DAY OF THE TRILOGY: SIEGFRIED

THIRD DAY OF THE TRILOGY: THE TWILIGHT

OF THE GODS





"Raging, Wotan Rides to the rock!

Like a storm-wind he comes!

See p. 143

THE · RHINECOLD & · THE · VALKYRIE

BY·RICHARD·WAGNER WITH·ILLUSTRATIONS BY·ARTHUR·RACKHAM



TRANSLATED · BY · MARCARET · AR MOUR LONDON & 250% WILLIA M· HEINEMANN NEW · YOR KRESON DOUBLEDAY · PAGE · & · C ° 1910

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CHARACTERS

GODS: WOTAN, DONNER, FROH, LOGE

NIBELUNGS: ALBERICH, MIME

GIANTS: FASOLT, FAFNER

GODDESSES: FRICKA, FREIA, ERDA

RHINE-MAIDENS: WOGLINDE, WELLGUNDE, FLOSSHILDE

SCENES OF ACTION

I. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RHINE

II. OPEN SPACE ON A MOUNTAIN HEIGHT NEAR THE RHINE

III. THE SUBTERRANEAN CAVERNS OF NIBELHEIM

IV. OPEN SPACE AS IN SCENE II.



FIRST SCENE

At the bottom of the Rhine

A greenish twilight, lighter above than below. The upper part is filled with undulating water, which streams restlessly from right to left. Towards the bottom the waves resolve themselves into a mist which grows finer as it descends, so that a space, as high as a man's body from the ground, appears to be quite free from the water, which stoats like a train of clouds over the gloomy stretch below. Steep rocky peaks jut up everywhere from the depths, and enclose the entire stage. The ground is a wild confusion of jagged rocks, no part of it being quite level, and on every side deeper fissures are indicated by a still denser gloom. IV oglinde circles with graceful swimming movements round the central rock.

Moglinde

Weia! Waga!
Roll, O ye billows,
Rock ye our cradle!
Wagala weia!
Wallala, weiala, weia!

Erom above.

Woglinde, watchest alone?

Moalinde

If Wellgunde came we were two.

& Aclaunde

Brigande Dives down to the rock. How keepest thou watch?

Moglinde

Wary of thee.

Swimming off, eludes her.

[They playfully tease and chase one another.

Flosshilde
From above.

Heiaha weia! Ho! ye wild sisters!

Mellaunde

Flosshilde, swim !
Woglinde flies:
Help me to hinder her flying.

flosshilde
Dives down between the two
at play.

The sleeping gold
Badly ye guard;
Watch with more zeal
The slumberer's bed,
Or dear you'll pay for your sport!

[They swim asunder with merry cries. Flosshilde tries to catch first the one, then the other. They elude her, and then combine to chase her, darting like fish from rock to rock with jests and laughter. Meanwhile Alberich climbs out of a dark ravine on to a rock. He pauses, still surrounded by darkness, and watches the frolic of the Rhine-Maidens with increasing pleasure.

Alberich

Hey, hey! ye nixies!
Ye are a lovely,
Lovable folk!
From Nibelheim's night
Fain would I come,
Would ye be kind to me.

[The maidens, as soon as they hear Alberich's voice, stop playing.

Teloglinde

Hei! Who is there?

Ettellgunde

A voice! It grows dark!

flossbilde.

Who listens below?

They dive down and see the Nibelung.

Moglinde and Meligunde

Fie! the loathsome one!

The frolic of the Rhine-Maidens See p. 4



Flosshilde Swimming up quickly.

Look to the gold! Father warned us Of such a foe.

[Both the others follow her, and all three gather quickly round the central rock.

Alberich

You above there!

The Three Rhaidens

What wouldst thou below there?

Alberich

Do I spoil sport

By standing and gazing here?

Dived ye but deeper, Fain the Niblung

Would join in your frolic and play.

Mellgunde

He wishes to join us?

Moglinde

Is he in jest?

Alberich

Ye gleam above me So glad and fair! If one would only

Glide down, how close in my arms Fondly clasped she would be!

Flosshilde

I laugh at my fears: The foe is in love.

& Hellgunde

The amorous imp!

Moglinde

Let us approach him.

[She finks down to the top of the rock, whose base Alberich has reached.

Alberich

Lo! one of them comes!

Moglinde

Climb up to me here!

Alberich

Climbs with gnome-like agility, though with repeated checks, to the summit of the rock. Irritably. Horrid rock,

So slippery, slimy!
I slide and slip!

My hands and feet vainly

Attempt to hold on To the slithery surface!

Vapour damp

Fills up my nostrils—Accursed sneezing!

[He has got near II oglinde.

Moglinde

Laughing.

Sneezing tells

That my suitor comes!

Alberich

Be thou my love! Adorable child!

[He tries to embrace her.

Moglinde

Escaping from him.

Here thou must woo, If woo me thou wilt!

[She swims up to another rock.

Alberich

Scratching his head.

Alas! not yet caught? Come but closer!

Hard I found

What so lightly thou didst.

Moglinde

Swims to a third rock lower down.

Deeper descend:

Thou'lt certainly seize me!

Alberich

Clambers down quickly.

Down there it is better!

Woglinde

But better still higher!

Darts upwards to a higher rock at the fide.

Etellgunde

and Flosshilde Laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Alberich

How capture this coy,

Elusive fish?

Wait for me, false one!

[He tries to climb after her in haste.

Mellgunde

Heia! my friend there! Dost thou not hear?

Has sunk down to

a lower rock on the other fide.

Alberich

Turning round.

What? Didst thou call?

Mellgunde

Be counselled by me: Forsake Woglinde, Climb up to me now!

Alberich

Climbs hastily over the riverbottom towards Wellgunde. Thou art more comely Far than that coy one; Her sheen is duller, Her skin too smooth. But thou must deeper Dive to delight me!

Mellgunde

Well, now am I near?

Sinking down till she is a little nearer him.

Alberich

Not near enough.
Thine arms around me
Tenderly throw,
That I may fondle

Thy neck with my fingers, And closely may cling

To thy bosom with love and with longing.

Mellgunde

Art thou in love?
For love art thou pining?
Approach and show me
Thy face and thy form.
Fie! thou horrible
Hunchback, for shame!

Swarthy, horny-skinned Rogue of a dwarf! Find thou a sweetheart Fonder than I!

Alberich
Tries to detain her
by force.

I may not be fair, But fast I can hold!

Mellgunde

Hold firm, or I will escape!

Swimming up quickly to the middle rock.

Moglinde

and Flosshilde Laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Alberich

Angrily

Angrily calling after Wellgunde. Fickle maid!
Bony, cold-blooded fish!
Fair if I seem not,
Pretty and playful,
Smooth and sleek—
Hei! if I am so loathsome

Hei! if I am so loathsome Give thy love to the eels!

flosshilde.

What ails thee, dwarf?
Daunted so soon?
Though two have been wooed,
Still a third waits thee,
Solace sweet

Fain at a word to grant!

Alberich

Soothing song
Sounds in my ear!
'Twas well I found
Three and not one!
The chance is I charm one of many,
Whilst, single, no one would choose me!
Hither come gliding,
And I will believe!

flosshilde
Dives down to
Alberich.

How senseless are ye, Silly sisters, Not to see he is fair!

Alberich

Hastening

towards her.

I well may deem them Dull and ill-favoured, Seeing how lovely thou art!

flosshilde.

Sing on! Thy song, So soft and sweet, Entrancing sounds in my ear!

Alberich

Caressing

her with

considence.

My heart burns And flutters and fails, Flattered by praises so sweet!

flosshilde Gently resisting him.

Thy grace and beauty
Make glad my eye;
And thy smile refreshes
My soul like balm!

[She draws him tenderly towards her.

Dearest of men!

Sweetest of maids!

Wert thou but mine!

Wert mine for ever!

Alberich Flosshilde

Ardently.

4Flossbilde

Alberich

To be pierced by thy glance,
To be pricked by thy beard,
To see and to feel them for aye!
Might thy hair hard as bristles
Flow ever more

Enraptured Flosshilde wreathing!
And thy form like a frog's,
And the croak of thy voice—
O could I, dumb with amaze,
Marvel forever on these!

Moalinde and Wellgunde

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Dive down close to them and laugh.

Alberich Starting in alarm.

Wretches, dare ye thus scoff?

A suitable end to the song. flossbilde. Suddenly durting away from him. [She swims up quickly with her sifters.

Modlinde

and Mellaunde Laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Alherich

In a waiting voice.

Woe's me! Ah, woe's me! Alas ! Alas ! The third one, so dear, Does she too betray? O sly and shameful Worthless and dissolute wantons ! Live ve on lies Alone, O ye false nixie brood?

The Three Rhine=Maidens

Wallala! Wallala! Lalalelai leialalei! Heia! Heia! ha! ha! Shame on thee goblin, Scolding down yonder! Cease, and do as we bid thee! Faint-hearted wooer, Why cou'dst not hold The maid, when won, more fast? True are we. And troth we keep With lovers when once caught. Grasp then and hold; Away with all fear! In the waves we scarce can escape Wallala !





Lalaleia! Leialalei! Heia! Heia! Ha hei!

[They swim apart hither and thither, now lower, now higher, to provoke Alberich to give chase.

Alberich

Fiercely within me
Passionate fires
Consume and flame!
Love and fury,
Wild, resistless,
Lash me to frenzy!
So laugh and lie your fill—
One of you I desire,
And one must yield to my yearning!

[He starts chasing them with desperate energy. He climbs with terrible agility, and, springing from rock to rock, tries to catch one maiden after another. They keep eluding him with mocking laughter. He stumbles and falls into the abyss, and clambers up quickly again and resumes the chase. They sink down a little towards him; he almost reaches them, but falls back again, and once more tries to catch them. At last he pauses out of breath, and, soaming with rage, stretches his clenched fist up towards the maidens.

Alberich

If but this fist had one!

He remains speechless with rage, gazing upwards, when he is suddenly attracted and arrested by the following spectacle. Through the water a light of continually increasing brilliance breaks from above, and, at a point near the top of the middle rock, kindles to a radiant and dazzling golden gleam. A magical light streams from this through the waves.

denoglinde

Look, sisters!

The wakener laughs to the deep.

Mellgunde

Through the billows green The blissful slumberer greets.

flossbilde

He kisses the eyelid, Making it open; Bathed in splendour, Behold it smiles, Sending, like a star,

Gleaming light through the waves.

The Three Rhine-Maidens Swimming

Swimming gracifully round the cliff together. Heia jaheia! Heia jaheia!

Wallala la la leia jahei !

Rhinegold!

Radiant delight,

How glorious and glad thy smile,

Over the water

Shooting effulgence afar!

Heia jahei! Heia jaheia! Waken, friend! Wake in joy!

That we may please thee,

Merry we'll play, Waters afire, Billows aflame,

As, blissfully bathing, Dancing and singing,

We dive and encircle thy bed!

Rhinegold! Rhinegold! Heia jaheia!

Heia jaheia! Wallala la la heia jahei!

> [With increasing mirthful abandonment the maidens swim round the rock. The water is filled with a glimmering golden

Alberich Whose eyes,

What is it, sleek ones, That yonder gleams and shines? Arongly attracted by the radiance, flare fixedly at the gold.

The Three Rhine=Maidens

Where dost thou hail from, O churl, Of the Rhinegold not to have heard?

Mellgunde

Knows not the elf Of the famed eye golden That wakes and sleeps in turn?

Moalinde

Of the star resplendent Down in the depths

Whose light illumines the waves?

The Three Rhine=Maidens Together.

See how gaily We glide in the glory! Wouldst thou also Be bathed in brightness, Come, float and frolic with us!

Wallala la leia lalei! Wallala la la leia jahei!

Alberich

Has the gold no value Apart from your games? It were not worth getting!

Moglinde

He would not scoff, Scorning the gold,

Did he but know all its wonders!

Mellgunde

That man surely The eart! would inherit

Who from the Rhinegold Fashioned the ring Which measureless power imparts.

flosshilde

Our father told us, And strictly bade us Guard with prudence The precious hoard

That no thief from the water might steal it.

Be still, then, chattering fools.

Mellgunde

O prudent sister, Why chide and reproach? Hast thou not heard That one alone

Can hope to fashion the gold?

Moglinde

Only the man
Who love defies,
Only the man
From love who flies

Can learn and master the magic That makes a ring of the gold.

Mellaunde

Secure then are we And free from care: For love is part of living; No one would live without loving.

Moglinde

And least of all he, The languishing elf, With pangs of love Pining away.

flosshilde.

I fear him not
Who should surely know,
By his savage lust
Almost inflamed.

"Mock away! Mock!
The Niblung makes for your toy!"
See p. 15





Weilgunde

A brimstone brand In the surging waves, In lovesick frenzy Hissing loud.

The Chree Khine-Maidens Together.

Wallala! Wallaleia la la!
Join in our laughter,
Lovable elf!
In the golden glory
How gallant thy sheen!

O come, lovely one, laugh as we laugh! Heia jaheia! Heia jaheia!

Wallala la la leia jahei l

[They swim, laughing, backwards and forwards in the light.

Alberich

His eyes fixed on the gold, has listened attentively to the sisters' rapid chatter. Could I truly

The whole earth inherit through thee?

If love be beyond me

My cunning could compass delight?

[In a terribly loud voice.

Mock away! Mock!
The Niblung makes for your toy!

[Raging he springs on to the middle rock, and clambers to the top. The maidens scatter, screaming, and swim upwards on different sides.

The Three Rhaidens

Heia! Heia! heia jahei!
Save yourselves!
The elf is distraught!
Swirling waters splash
At every leap:

The creature's crazy with love!
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Alberich

Reaching the top

with a last spring.

Still undismayed?
Go, wanton in darkness,
Water-born brood!

He stretches his hand out towards the gold.

My hand quenches your light;
I tear the gold from the rock;
Forged be the ring for revenge!
Bear witness, ye floods—
I forswear love and curse it!

[He tears the gold from the rock with terrific force, and immediately plunges with it into the depths, where he quickly disappears. Sudden darkness envelops the scene. The maidens dive down after the robber.

The Three Rhine=Maidens Seize the despoiler!
Rescue the gold!
Help us! Help us!
Woe! Woe!

[The water finks with them. From the lowest depth Alberich's shrill, mocking laughter rings up. The rocks are hidden by impenetrable darkness. The whole stage from top to bottom is filled with black waves, which for some time appear to sink even lower.



*Seize the despoiler!
Rescue the gold!
Help us! Help us!
Woe! Woe!"
See p. 16





SECOND SCENE

The waves have gradually changed into clouds which, becoming lighter and lighter by degrees, finally disperse in a fine mist. As the mist vanishes upwards in light little clouds an open space on a mountain height becomes visible in the dim light which precedes dawn. At one side Wotan with Fricka beside him, both asleep, lie on a slowery bank. The dawning day illumines with increasing brightness a castle with glittering pinnacles which stands on the summit of a cliss in the background. Between this and the foreground a deep valley is visible through which the Rhine slows.

Fricka Wotan! My lord! Awaken!

Awakes; her gaze falls on the castle, which has
become plainly visible; alarmed.

Continuing to dream.

The happy hall of delight
Is guarded by gate and door:
Manhood's honour,
Power for aye,
Rise to my lasting renown!

Fricka Shakes him. Up from deceitful
Bliss of a dream!
My husband, wake and consider!
The walls everlasting are built!

Awakes and raises himself slightly. His glance is immediately arrested by the view of the castle.

The Gods' abode
Proudly rears
Its radiant strength!
As I nursed it in dream
And desired it to be,
Strong it stands,
Fair to behold,
Brave and beautiful pile!

On yonder summit

Fricka

While thou rejoicest,
Joyless am I.
Thou hast thy hall;
My heart fears for Freia.
Heedless one, hast thou forgotten
The price that was to be paid?
The work is finished,
And forfeit the pledge:
Hast thou then no care for the cost?

717Antan

My bargain well I remember With them who built the abode.

'Twas a pact tamed them,
The obstinate race,
So that this hallowed
Hall they have built me.
It stands—the strong ones' doing:—
Fret not thou, counting the cost.

Fricka

O laughing, insolent lightness!
Mirth how cruel and callous!
Had I but known of thy pact,
The trick had never been played;

But far from your counsels
Ye men kept the women,
That, deaf to us and in peace
Alone ye might deal with the giants.

So without shame
Ye promised them Freia,
Freia, my beautiful sister,
Proud of playing the thief.

What remains holy
Or precious to men
Once grown greedy of might?

Calmly.

From such greed
Was Fricka then free
Herself when the castle she craved?

Fricka

I was forced to ponder some means To keep my husband faithful, True to me when his fancy Tempted him far from his home.

Halls high and stately, Decked to delight thee, Were to constrain thee To peaceful repose.

But thou hadst the work designed Intent on war alone;

It was to add

More to thy might still,

To stir up to tumult still fiercer

That built were the towering walls

EdotanSmiling.

Wouldst thou, O Wife!
In the castle confine me,
To me, the god, must be granted,
Faithful at home,
The right to wage war
And conquer the world from without.
Ranging and changing
All men love:
That sport at least thou must leave me.

fricka

Cold, hard-hearted,
Merciless man!
For the idle baubles,
Empire and sway,
Thou stakest in insolent scorn
Love and a woman's worth!

Motan

When I went wooing, to win thee I staked ungrudging Gladly one of my eyes:
What folly now then to scold!

Women I honour
Beyond thy desire!
I will not abandon
Frei, the fair:
Such never was my intent.

Fricka

Anxiously looking towards a H point not on the stage.

Then succour her now:
Defenceless, in fear,
Hither she hastens for help!

Freia

Enters as if flying from some one.

Help me, sister!
Shield me, O brother!
From yonder mountain
Menaces Fasolt:

He comes to bear me off captive.

Motan

Let him come! Sawest thou Loge?

Fricka

To this tricky deceiver
O why wilt thou trust?
He always snares thee anew,
Though from his snares thou hast suffered.

Motan

I ask for no aid
Where simple truth suffices;
But to turn the spite
Of foes to profit,
Craft and cunning alone
Can teach, as by Loge employed.
He whose advice I obeyed
Has promised ransom for Freia:
On him my faith I have fixed.

Fricka

And art left in the lurch.

The giants come.

Lo! hither they stride:

Where lingers now thine ally?

Freia

Where tarry ye, my brothers, When help ye should bring me, Weak and bartered away by my kin?

O help me, Donner! Hither! Hither! Rescue Freia, my Froh!

Fricka

Now the knaves who plotted and tricked

Abandon thee in thy need.

[Fasolt and Fafner, both of gigantic stature, enter, armed with stout clubs.

#asolt

Soft sleep

Sealed thine eyes

While we, both sleepless,

Built the castle walls:

Working hard
Wearied not,
Heaping, heaving
Heavy stones.
Tower steep,
Door and gate
Keep and guard

Thy goodly castle halls.

[Pointing to the castle.

There stands
What we builded,
Shining fair
Beneath the sun.
Enter in

And pay the price!

Malatan

Name, Workers, your wage.
What payment will appease you?

#Fasolt

We made the terms That seemed to us meet.

Hast thou forgot so soon?
Freia, the fair one,
Holda, the free one—
The bargain is
We bear her away.

Unotan *Quickly*.

Ye must be mad
To moot such a thing!
Ask some other wage;
Freia I will not grant.

fasolt
Stands for a
space speechlefs
with angry
surprise.

What is this? Ha!
Wouldest deceive?—
Go back on thy bond?
What thy spear wards
Are they but sport,
All the runes of solemn bargain?

fainer.

O trusty brother!
Fool, dost now see the trick?

fasolt

Son of light, Light, unstable, Hearken! Have a care! In treaties keep thou troth! What thou art Thou art only by treaties, For, built on bonds. There are bounds to thy might. Though cunning thou. More clever than we: Though we once freemen. Are pledged to peace, Cursed be all thy wisdom :-Peaceful promises perish!— Wilt thou not open, Honest and frank







Stand fast by a bargain once fixed.

A stupid giant
Tells thee this:

O wise one, take it from him!

matoHS

When plainly we were but jesting!

The beautiful Goddess

Light and bright—

For churls what charm could she have?

fasolt

Jeerest thou?
Ha! how unjust!
Ye who by beauty rule,
Proud and radiant race!
How foolish, striving
For towers of stone,
Woman's love to pledge—
Price of walls and of halls!
We dolts, despising ease,
Sweating with toil-hardened hands,
Have worked, that a woman
With gentle delight
In our midst might sojourn
And ye call the pact a jest?

Fainer

Cease thy childish chatter;
No gain look we to get.
Freia's charms
Mean little;
But it means much,
If from the Gods we remove her.
Golden apples
Ripen within her garden;
She alone
Grows the apples and tends them.
The goodly fruit

Gives to her kinsfolk. Who eat thereof, Youth everlasting. Sick and pale, Their beauty would perish, Old and weak, Wasting away.

Were not Freia among them.

Roughly.

From their midst, therefore, Freia must forth !

Motan Aside.

Loge lingers long!

Fasolt

We wait for thy word!

@ daotan

Ask some other wage!

-Fasolt

No other: Freia alone!

4Fa fner

Thou there, follow us!

[Fafner and Fasolt press towards Freia. Froh and Donner enter in haste.

freia

Help from the harsh ones! Help!

froh Clasping Freia To me, Freia!

To Fafner.

in his arms.

Back, overbold one! Froh shields the fair one!

Bonner Confronting the giants.

Fasolt and Fafner, Have ve not felt With what weight my hammer falls?

4Fafner

What means thy threat?

ffasolt

What wouldst thou here? No strife we desire; We want but our due reward.

RHINEGOLD THE

Bonner

Oft I've doled out Giants their due: Come, your reward is here Waiting, full measure and more!

He swings his hammer.

Malotan

Stretching out his spear between the combatants.

Hold, thou fierce one! Nothing by force! All bonds and treaties My spear protects; Spare then thy hammer's haft!

freia

Woe's me! Woe's me! Wotan forsakes me!

Fricka

Can such be thy thought, Merciless man?

Waotan

Turns away and sees Loge coming.

There comes Loge! Hot is thy haste Smoothly to settle Thy sorry, badly-made bargain!

Loge

Has come up out of the valley in the background.

What is this bargain That I am blamed for?— The one with the giants That thou thyself didst decide? O'er hill and o'er hollow Drives me my whim; House and hearth I do not crave. Donner and Froh, They dream but of roof and room:

Wedding, must have A home in which to dwell A stately hall,

A fortress fast.

It was such Wotan wished.

Hall and house, Castle, court,

The blissful abode

Now stands complete and strong.

I proved the lordly Pile myself; In fear of flaws, Scanning it close Fasolt and Fafner Faithful I found:

Firm-bedded is each stone.

I was not slothful Like many here:

Who calls me sluggard, he lies!

Motan

Cunningly
Thou wouldst escape!
Warned be, and wisely
Turn from attempts to deceive.

Of all the Gods
I alone stood by thee
As thy friend,

In the gang that trusted thee not. Now speak, and to the point! For when the builders at first As wage Freia demanded,

I gave way only,
Trusting thy word
When thou didst solemnly promise
To ransom the noble pledge.

Logs

Perplexed to puzzle,
Plans to ponder
For its redeeming—
That promise I gave;

But to discover What cannot be. What none can do. No man can possibly promise.

Fricka See the treacherous

Rogue thou didst trust!

frob Named art Loge.

But liar I call thee!

Accursed flame. Monner

I will quench thy fire!

From their shame to shelter. Loge

Foolish folk flout me.

[Donner threatens to Itrike Loge.

Matoran Stepping

between them.

Forbear and let him alone! Ye wot not Loge's wiles.

His advice.

Given slowly, gains Both in weight and in worth.

Fafner

Do not dally; Promptly pay!

Hasolt

Long waits our reward.

Motan

Speak up surly one! Turns Sternly Fail me not!

to Loge.

How far hast thou ranged and roamed?

Loge

Still with reproach Is Loge paid! Concerned but for thee, Thorough and swift, I searched and ransacked To the ends of the earth

To find a ransom for Freia Fair to the giants and just.

> In vain the search, Convincing at last That the world contains

Nothing so sweet

That a man will take it instead Of woman's love and delight.

All seem surprised and taken aback.

Where life moves and has being, In water, earth and air

I questioned.

Asking of all things, Where weak still is strength,

And germs only stirring,

What men thought dear—

And stronger deemed-Than woman's love and delight.

But where life moves and has being

My questions met But with laughter and scorn. In water, earth and air

Woman and love Will none forego.

[Varied gestures of amazement.

One man, one only, I met who, renouncing love. Prized ruddy gold

Above any woman's grace.

The Rhine's pure-gleaming children

Told me of their sorrow.

The Nibelung, Night-Alberich. Wooed for the favour Of the swimmers in vain, And vengeance took.

"The Rhine's pure-gleaming children
Told me of their sorrow"

See p. 28



Stealing the Rhinegold they guard.

He thinks it now A thing beyond price.

Greater than woman's grace.

For their glittering toy
Thus torn from the deep

The sorrowful maids lamented.

They pray, Wotan, Pleading to thee.

That thy wrath may fall on the robber;

The gold too

They would have thee grant them

To guard in the water for ever.

Loge promised

The maidens to tell thee,

And, keeping faith, he has told.

ERotan

Dull thou must be

Or downright knavish!

In parlous plight myself,
What help have I for others?

Fasolt
Who has been

listening attentively, to Fafner. The Niblung has much annoyed us; I greatly grudge him this Rhinegold; But such his craft and cunning, He has never been caught.

Fafner

Other malice

Ponders the Niblung;

Gains he might from gold

Listen, Loge!

Tell us the truth.

What wondrous gift has the gold, That the dwarf desires it so?

Loge

A plaything,

In the waves providing Children with laughter and sport,

It gives, when to golden Ring it is rounded, Power and might unmatched; It wins its owner the world.

Telotan

Thoughtfully.

Rumours I have heard
Of the Rhinegold;
Runes of riches
Hide in its ruddy glow;
Pelf and power
Are by the ring bestowed.

Jfricka
Softly to Loge.

Could this gaud,
This gleaming trinket
Forged from the gold,
Be worn by a woman too?

Lage

The wife who wore
That glittering charm
Never would lose
Her husband's love—
That charm which dwarfs are welding,
Working in thrall to the ring.

fricka Coaxingly to Wotan. O could but my husband Come by the ring!

As if falling
more and more
under the influence
of a spell.

Methinks it were wisdom,
Won I the ring to my service.
But say, Loge,
How shall I learn
To forge and fashion it true?

Loge

A magic rune
Can round the golden ring.
No one knows it,
Yet plain the spell to him
Who happy love forswears.

[Wotan turns away in annoyance.

That suits thee not;
Thou art too late too.
Alberich did not delay;
Fearless he mastered
The potent spell,

[Harshly.

And wrought aright was the ring.

Donner
To Wotan

We should all be Under the dwarf, Were not the ring from him wrested.

Motan

The ring I must capture!

Froh

Lightly now,
Without cursing love it were won.

Loge
Harshly.

Just so:

Without guile, as in children's games !

EElotan

Then tell us how.

Loge

By theft!
What a thief stole
Steal thou from the thief;
How better could object be won?
But with baleful arms
Battles Alberich.
Wary, wise

Must be thy scheming,
If the thief thou wouldst confound,

[With warmth.

And restore the ruddy
And golden toy,
The Rhinegold, to the maidens.
For this they pray and implore.

Motan

The river-maidens?
What profit were mine?

Fricka

Of that billow-born brood Bring me no tidings, For they have wooed To my woe

Full many a man to their caves.

[Wotan stands silent, struggling with himself. The other Gods gaze at him in mute suspense. Fasner, meanwhile, has been consulting aside with Fasolt.

Fainer
To Fasolt

Worth far more than Freia
Were the glittering gold.
Eternal youth, too, were his
Who could use the charm in its
quest.

[Fasolt's gestures indicate that he is being convinced against his will. Fasner and Fasolt approach Wotan again.

Fainer

Hear, Wotan,
Our word while we wait;
Freia we will restore you,
And will take
Paltrier payment:
The Niblung's red-gleaming gold
Will guerdon us giants rude.

Motan

Ye must be mad!
With what I possess not
How can I, shameless ones, pay you?

ffafner.

Went to those walls;
How easy
With fraud-aided force
(What our malice never achieved)
The Niblung to break and bind!

Hard labour

Fasolt suddenly seizes Freia and drags her to one side with Fafner



More quickly.

Why should I make
War on the Niblung?—
Fight, your foe to confound?
Insolent
And greedily grasping
Dolts you grow through my debt!

#asolt
Suddenly seizes
Freia and drags
her to one side
with Fasner.

Maiden, come!
We claim thee ours!
As pledge thou shalt be held
Till the ransom is paid.

Freia Screaming,

Woe's me! Woe's me! Woe!

Fafner

From your midst
We bear her forth!
Till evening—mark it well!—
As a pledge she is ours.
We will return then.
But when we come,
If the Rhinegold be not ready,
The Rhinegold bright and red——

Fasolt

The respite is ended,
Freia is forfeit
And bides among us for aye!

Friea

Sister! Brothers! Save me! Help!

[The giants haften off, dragging Freia with them.

Froh

Up! Follow fast!

Ponner

Fall now the heavens!
[They look inquiringly at Wotan.

Freia In the distance. Save me! Help!

Loge
Looking after
the giants.

Downward over stock and stone
Striding they go;
Through the ford across the Rhine
Wade now the robbers.
Sad at heart
Hangs Freia,
Thrown rudely over rough shoulders!
Heia! hei!
The louts, how they lumber along!
Through the Rhine valley they reel.
Not till Riesenheim's march
Is reached will they rest!

He turns to the Gods.

How darkly Wotan doth dream! What ails the high, happy Gods?

[A pale mist, gradually increasing in density, fills the stage. Seen through it the Gods look more and more wan and aged. All stand in dismay and apprehension regarding Wotan, whose eyes are fixed broodingly on the ground.

Loge

Does a mist mock me?
Tricks me a dream?
Dismayed and wan,
How swiftly ye fade!
Lo! the bloom forsakes your cheeks,
And quenched is the light of your eyes!
Courage, Froh!
Day's but begun!
From thy hand, Donner,
The hammer is falling!
And why frets Fricka?
Sees she with sorrow
That Wotan's hair, growing grey,
Has made him gloomy and old?

The Gods grow wan and aged at the loss of Freia See p. 34



Woe's me! Woe's me! Fricka

What does it mean?

My hand sinks down. Bonner

Froh My heart stands still.

I have it: hear what ye lack! Loge Of Freia's fruit

Ye have not partaken to-day. The golden apples Within her garden

Restored you your strength and your youth,

Ate ye thereof each day. The garden's guardian In pledge has been given. On the branches dries And droops the fruit,

To drop soon and decay.

My loss is lighter, For still did Freia.

Stingy to me,

Stint the delectable fruit. Not half as godlike

Am I, ye high ones, as you!

Freely, but quickly and harshty.

But ve trusted solely To the fruit that makes young,

As well both the giants wist. Your life they played for,

Plotted to take;

Contrive so that they fail. Lacking the apples, Old and worn,

Grey and weary,

Wasting, the scoff of the world, The Gods must pine and pass.

Fricka
Anxiously.

Wotan, alas!
Unhappy man!
See what thy laughing
Lightness has brought us—
Scoff and scorn for all!

Coming to a sudden resolve, farts up.

Up, Loge,
And follow me!
To Nibelheim hastening downward,
I go in search of the gold.

Loge

The Rhine-daughters
Thy aid invoked:
Not vainly they hoped for thy help then?

EMotanAngrily.

Fool, be silent!
Freia, the fair one—
Freia's ransom we go for.

Loge

Where thou wouldst go
Gladly I lead.
Shall we dive
Sheer through the depths of the Rhine?

77Aotan

Not through the Rhine.

Loge

Then swift let us swing
Through this smoky chasm.
Together, come, creep we in!

[He goes in front and vanishes at the side through a cleft, from which, immediately afterwards, sulphurous vapour streams forth.

Motan

Ye others wait
Till evening here;

The golden ransom
When got will again make us young.

[He descends after Loge into the chasm. The sulphurous vapour which rises from it spreads over the whole stage and quickly fills it with thick clouds. Those who remain behind are soon hidden.

Bonner

Fare thee well, Wotan!

Froh

Good luck! Good luck!

Fricka

O come back soon To thy sorrowing wife!

[The sulphurous vapour darkens till it becomes a black cloud, which rises upwards from below. This then changes to a dark, rocky cavern which keeps rifing, so that the stage scems to fink deeper and deeper into the earth.





THIRD SCENE

From various points in the distance ruddy lights gleam out. An increasing clamour, as of smiths at work, is heard on all sides. The clang of the anvils dies away. A wast subterranean chasm becomes visible which seems to open into narrow gorges on all sides. Alberich drags the screaming Mime out of a side cleft.

Alberich

Héhé! Héhé!
Come here! Come here!
Mischievous dwarf!
Prettily pinched
Promptly thou'lt be
Hast thou not ready,
Wrought to my wish,
The dainty thing I desire!

Mime Howling.

Ohé! Ohé!
Oh! Oh!
Let me alone!
It is forged;
Heeding thy hest
I laboured hard
Till it was done!
Take but thy nails from my ear!

Alberich

Then why this delay To show thy work?

Mime

I feared that something Might still be wanting.

Mime, howling. "Ohé! Ohé! Oh!"
See p. 38



Alberich

What is there to finish?

Mime Embarrassed,

Here—and there—

Alberich

How here and there? Hand me the thing!

[He tries to catch hold of his ear again. In his terror Mime drops a piece of metal-work which he has been clutching convulsively. Alberich picks it up hastily and examines it with care.

Rogue, observe!
See how all wrought is
Well finished and feat,
Done as desired!
The simpleton wants
Slyly to trick me
And keep by cunning
The wonderful work,
Though all his skill
Came alone from my craft.

Thou art discovered, thief.

[He puts the Tarnhelm on his head.

The helmet fits the head;
But will the spell prosper too?

[Very softly.

" Night and darkness, Seen of none!"

[He vanishes, and a pillar of cloud takes his place.

Brother, canst see me?

Mime
Looks round in amaze.

Where art thou? I see no one.

Alberich
Invisible.

Then feel me instead,
Thou lazy scamp!
Take that for thy thievish thoughts!

Mime

Ohé ! Ohé I

Writhes under the

Oh I Oh! Oh!

lashes he receives, the sound of which is heard without the whip being seen.

Alberich. Invisible and laughing.

Ha! ha! ha!

Ha! ha! ha!

I thank thee, blockhead: Thy work has stood the test.

> Hoho! Hoho! Nibelungs all

Bow now to Alberich!

For he is everywhere, Waiting and watching:

Peace and rest

Are past for ever: Ye must all serve him.

Though see him can none;

Where he cannot be spied Look out for his coming;

None shall escape from his thraldom!

[Harshly.

Hoho! hoho! Hearken, he nears: The Nibelung's lord!

> The pillar of cloud disappears in the background. Alberich's scolding voice is heard more and more faintly. Mime lies huddled up in pain. Wotan and Loge come down through a cleft in the rock.

Loge

Nibelheim here.

Through pale mists gleaming,

How bright yonder fiery sparks glimmer!

Mime

Oh! Oh! Oh!

Talotan

I hear loud groans. Who lies on the ground? Mime writhes under the lashes he receives

See p. 40



Loge
Bends over Mime. Why all this whimpering noise?

Mine Ohé! Ohé! Oh! Oh!

Hei, Mime! Merry dwarf!
Who beats and bullies thee so?

Mime Leave me in peace, pray.

Loge So much is certain,
And more still. Hark!
Help I promise thee, Mime!

[He raises him with difficulty.

What help for me?

To do his bidding

My brother can force me, For I am bound as his slave.

But, Mime, how has he
Thus made thee his thrall?

Mime By evil arts

Fashioned Alberich
A yellow ring,
From the Rhinegold forged,
At whose mighty magic
Trembling we marvel;

This spell puts in his power The Nibelung hosts of night.

Happy we smiths
Moulded and hammered,
Making our women
Trinkets to wear—

Exquisite Nibelung toys—And lightly laughed at our toil.

The rogue now compels us
To creep into caverns,
For him alone
To labour unthanked.
Through the golden ring
His greed can divine
Where untouched treasure
In hidden gorge gleams.
We still must keep spying,
Peering and delving:
Must melt the booty,
Which, molten, we forge
Without pause or peace,
To heap up higher his hoard.

Loge

Just now, then, an idler Roused him to wrath?

Mime

Poor Mime, ah!
My lot was the hardest.
I had to work,
Forging a helmet,
With strict instructions
How to contrive it;
And well I marked
The wondrous might
Bestowed by the helm
That from steel I wrought.
Hence I had gladly
Held it as mine,
And, by its virtue

Risen at last in revolt:

Perchance, yes, perchance
The master himself I had mastered,
And, he in my power, had wrested
The ring from him and used it

That he might serve me, the free man,

[Harshly.

As now I must serve him, a slave!

Loge

And wherefore, wise one, Sped not the plan?

Mime

Ah! though the helm I fashioned,
The magic that lurks therein
I foolishly failed to divine.
He who set the task
And seized the fruits—
From him I have learnt,
Alas! but too late!

All the helmet's cunning craft.

From my sight he vanished,
But, viciously lashing,
Swung his arm through unseen.

[Howling and sobbing.

This, fool that I am, Was all my thanks!

[He rubs his back. IV otan and Loge laugh.

Loge
To Wotan.

Confess, our task Will call for skill.

Motan

Yet the foe will yield, Use thou but fraud.

Mime

Observes the Gods more attentively.

Who are you, ye strangers That ask all these questions?

Loge

Friends to thee, Who from their straits Will free all the Nibelung folk.

Mime

Hark! Have a care!

Shrinking back in Alberich comes!

fear when he hears Alberich returning. [He runs to and fro in terror

Felotan

We'll wait for him here.

[He fits drawn calmly on a flone. Alberich, act has taken the Tarnhelm from his head and hang it on his girdle, is brandishing his so argueral driving before him a band of Nachangs from the garges below. These are lader swith gold and filver treasure, which, urged on by Alterich, they pile up so as to from a large heap.

Albertch

Hither! Thither!

Héhé! Hoho!

Lazy herd!

Haste and heap

Higher the hoard.

Up with thee there!

On with thee here!

Indolent dolts,

Down with the treasure!

Need ye my urging?

Here with it all!

[1] walker's fractives Wotan and Loge.

Hey! Who are they
That thus intrude?
Mime! Come here!
Rascally rogue!
Gossiping art
With the pilgriming pair?
Off, thou idler!

Back to thy bellows and beating!

[Lashing Mime, he chases him into the crowd of No changs.

Hey! to your labour!
Get ye all hence now!
Swing ye down swift!
From the virgin gorges
Get me the gold!
This whip will follow,





Delve ye not fast!
That labour ye shirk not
Mime be surety,
Or surely the lash
Of my whip will find him;
That where no one would guess
I watch and I wander,
None knows it better than he.
Loitering still?
Lingering there?

[He pulls the ring from his finger, kisses it and stretches it out in menace.

Fear ye and tremble, O fallen host, And obey The ring's dread lord!

[Howling and shricking, the Nibelungs, among them Mime, scatter, and creep down into the clefts in all dirictions.

Alberich What seek ye here?

Looks long and distrustfully at IV of an and Loge.

From Nibelheim's gloomy realm
Strange tidings have travelled up,
Tales of wonders
Worked here by Alberich;
And, greedy of marvels,
Hither came we as guests.

Alberich

By envy urged,

Hither ye hie.

Such doughty guests

I do not mistake.

Since I am known,
Ignorant elf,
Say then, with growling

Whom dost thou greet?
In caverns cold
Where once thou didst crouch,
Who gave thee light
And fire for thy comfort,
Had Loge not smiled on thee?
Or what hadst thou fashioned
Had not I heated thy forge?
I am thy kinsman
And once was kind:
Lukewarm, methinks, are thy thanks!

Alberich

On light-born elves
Laughs now Loge,
The crafty rogue:
Art thou, false one, their friend
As my friend thou wert once,
Haha! I laugh!
No harm from such need I fear.

Loge

No cause then for thy distrust.

Alberich

I can trust thy falsehood, Not thy good faith!

[Taking up a defiant attitude.

Yet I dare you all unflinching.

Loge

'Tis thy might
That makes thee so bold;
Grimly great
Groweth thy power.

Alberich

Seest thou the hoard Yonder heaped High by my host?

Loge

A richer one never was seen.

Alberich

A wretched pile
Is this to-day, though.
Boldly mounting,
'Twill be bigger henceforward.

Talotan

But what is gained by the hoard In joyless Nibelheim, Where wealth finds nothing to buy?

Alberich

Treasure to gather
And treasure to garner—
Thereto Nibelheim serves.
But with the hoard
In the caverns upheaped
Wonders all wonder surpassing
Will I perform
And win the whole world and its fairness.

& Laotan

But, my friend, how compass that goal?

Alberich

Ye who live above and breathe
The balmy, sweet airs,
Love and laugh:
A hand of gold

Ere long, O ye Gods, will have gripped you! As I forswore love, even so

No one alive
But shall forswear it;
By golden songs wooed,

For gold alone will his greed be.
On hills of delight
Your home is, where gladness
Softly lulls;
The dark elves

Ye despise, O deathless carousers!

Beware!

Beware!

For first your men
Shall bow to my might;
Then your women fair
Who my wooing spurned
The dwarf will force to his will,
Though frowned on by love.

Laughing savagely.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! Mark ye my word? Beware!

Beware of the hosts of the night, When rise shall the Nibelung hoard From silent depths to the day!

Ecotan.
Furiously.

Alberich

Loge
Stepping
between them.

Avaunt, impious fool!

What says he?

Cease from thy folly!

[To Alberich.

Who would gaze not in wonder,
Beholding Alberich's work?
If only thy skill can achieve
Everything hope has promised,
Almighty I needs must acclaim thee!

For moon and stars
And the sun in his glory,
Forced to do thee obeisance,
Even they must bow down.
But what would seem of most moment

Is that they who serve thee,
The Nibelung hosts,
Bow and bear no hate.
When thy hand held forth a ring
Thy folk were stricken with fear.

But in thy sleep A thief might slip up

And steal slyly the ring.
Say, how wouldst thou save thyself then?

Alberich

Most shrewd to himself seems Loge;

Others always
Figure as fools.
If I had to ask for
Advice or aid
On bitter terms,

How happy the thief would be!

This helmet that hides
I schemed for myself,
And chose for its smith

Mime, finest of forgers.

I am now able
Swift to assume
Any form that I fancy,
Through the helm.
No one sees me,
Search as he will;
Though everywhere hidden,
I always am there.
So, fearing nothing,
Even from thee I am safe,
Most kind, careful of friends!

Loge

I have met
Full many a marvel,
But one so wondrous
Have never known.
Achievement so matchless
Scarce can I credit.
Were this possible, truly
Thy might indeed were eternal.

Alberich

Dost thou believe I lie, as would Loge?

Loge

Till it is proved I must suspect thy word.

Alberich

Puffed up with wisdom,
The fool will explode soon:
Of envy then die!
Decide to what I shall change;
In that form I shall stand.

Loge

Nay, choose for thyself, But strike me dumb with amaze.

Alberich

Puts the Tarnhelm on he head, "Dragon dread,

Wreathe thou and wriggle!"

[H. from mately disappears. An enormous serpent writies on the floor in his place. It was and threatens Wotan and Loge with its open jaws.

Logr

Pretends to be terrified,

Ohé!

Alberich

Laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Loge

Ohé! Ohé!
Horrible dragon,
O swallow me not!
Spare the life of poor Loge!

Telotan

Good, Alberich! Well done, rascal! How swiftly grew

The dwarf to the dragon immense!

[The dragon disappears and, in its flead, Abortch is again seen in his own shape.

Alberich

He he! Ye scoffers, Are ye convinced?





Loge

In a trembling voice.

My trembling tells thee how truly.

A giant snake

Thou wert in a trice.

Having beheld,

I must credit the wonder.

Couldest thou turn

To something quite tiny

As well as bigger?

Methinks that way were best

For slyly slipping from foes;

That, though, I fear were too hard!

Alberich

For thee, yes; Thou art so dull!

How small shall I be?

Loge

The most cramped of crannies must hold

thee

That hides the timorous toad.

Alberich

Nothing simpler!
Look at me now!

He puts the Tarnhelm on his head again.

"Crooked toad,

Creep and crawl there!"

[He vanishes. The Gods see a toad on the rocks creeping towards them.

Loge

To Wotan.

Quick and catch it! Capture the toad!

> [Wotan sets his foot on the toad. Loge makes a dash at its head and holds the Tarnhelm in his hand.

Alberich

Ohé! I'm caught! My curse upon them!

Is suddenly seen My curse upon in his own shape writhing under Wotan's foot.

Loge

Hold him fast Till he is bound.

[Loge binds his hands and feet with a rope. Now swiftly up!
Then he is ours.

[Both seize hold of the prisoner, who struggles violently, and drag him towards the shaft by which they descended. They disappear mounting upwards.





FOURTH SCENE

The scene has changed as before, only in reverse order. Open space on mountain heights. The prospect is veiled by pale mist as at the end of the second scene. Wotan and Loge climb up out of the cavern, bringing with them Alberich bound.

Loge

Here, kinsman,
Thou canst sit down!
Friend, look round thee;
There lies the world

That was thine for the winning, thou fool!
What corner, say,

Wilt give to me for my stall?

[He dances round Alberich, snapping his fingers.

Alberich

Infamous robber!
Thou knave! Thou rogue!
Loosen the rope,
Set me at large,
Or dear for this outrage shalt answer!

a Alotan

My captive art thou,
Caught and in fetters.
As thou hadst fain
Subdued the world
And all that the world containeth,
Thou liest bound at my feet,
And, coward, canst not deny it.
A ransom alone

A ransom alone Shall loose thee from bonlige.

Alberich

Ah, the dolt,
The dreamer I was,
To trust blindly
The treacherous thief!
Fearful revenge
Shall follow this wrong!

Loge

Vain talk this of vengeance
Before thy freedom is won.

To a man in bonds
No free man expiates outrage.

If vengeance thou dreamest,

Dream of the ransom
First without further delay!

[He shows him the kind of ransom ty snapping his fingers.

Alberich

Declare then your demands.

Zaotan

The hoard and thy gleaming gold.

Alberich

Pack of unscrupulous thieves!

[Afide.

If I only can keep the ring,
The hoard I can lightly let go,
For anew I could win it
And add to its worth
By the powerful spell of the ring.
If as warning it serves
To make me more wise,

The warning will not have been lost, Even though lost may be the gold.

Motan

Wilt yield up the hoard?

Alberich

Loosen my hand To summon it here.

[Loge frees his right hand.

Alberich
Touches the
ring with his
lips and secretly
murmurs the

command.

Behold the Nibelungs
Hither are called;
I can hear them coming,
Bid by their lord,

With the hoard from the depths to the day. Now loosen these burdensome bonds.

Wotan

Nay, first in full thou must pay.

[The Nibeliangs come up out of the cleft laden with the objects of which the hoard is composed.

Alberich

O bitter disgrace
That my shrinking bondsmen
Should see me captive and bound!

To the Nibelungs.

Lay it down there,
As ye are bid!
In a heap
Pile up the hoard.
Must I aid, idlers?
No spying at me!
Haste there! Haste!
Then get ye gone quickly.
Hence to your work.
Home to your gorges!

Let the sluggards beware, For I follow hard at your heels!

[H A short of what has it out with an air of who was. As a finish with a blow, the Ni charge press terrified and cowering towards the eleft, down which they haftily disappear.

Alberich

The price is paid;
Let me depart!
And that helm of mine
Which Loge still holds,
That also pray give me again!

Hoge The plunder must pay for the pardon.

Throwing the Tarnhelm on to the heap.

Alberich Accursed thief!

But patience! Calm! He who moulded the one Makes me another;

Still mine is the might
That Mime obeys.

Loath indeed Am I to leave

My cunning defence to the foe!

Nothing Alberich
Owns at all now;

Unbind, ye tyrants, his bonds!

Loge Ought I to free him?

To IVotan. Art thou content?

Watan A golden ring

Girdles thy finger: Hearest, elf?

That also belongs to the hoard.

Albertich The ring?

The ring must also Go to the ransom.

Albertch
Trembling. My life—but the ring: not that!

With greater violence.

The ring I covet;

For thy life I care not at all.

Alberich

But if my life I ransom

The ring I must also rescue;

Hand and head,
Eye and ear
Are not mine more truly
Than mine is the ruddy ring!

Motan

The ring thou claimest as thine?
Impudent elf, thou art raving.
Tell the truth;
Whence was gotten the gold
To fashion the glittering gaud?
How could that be
Thine which reft was,

Thou rogue, from watery deeps?

To the Rhine's fair daughters

Down and inquire

If the gold

Was as gift to thee given

Was as gift to thee given
That thou didst thieve for the ring!

Alberich

Vile double-dealing! Shameless deceit ! Wouldst thou, robber, Reproach in me The sin so sweet to thyself? How fain thou hadst Bereft the Rhine of its gold. If it had been As easy to forge as to steal! How well for thee, Thou unctuous knave, That the Nibelung, stung By shameful defeat, And by fury driven, Was fired into winning the spell That now alluringly smiles! Shall I. bliss debarred,

Anguish-burdened
Because of the
Curse-laden deed,
My ring as a toy
Grant to princes for pleasure,
My ban bringing blessing to thee?
Have a care,
Arrogant God!
My sin was one
Concerning myself alone:
But against all that was,
Is and shall be
Thou wouldst wantonly sin,
Eternal one, taking the ring.

Colotan

Yield the ring!
Thy foolish talk
Gives no title to that.

[He seizes Alberich and draws the ring from his finger by force.

Alberich

With a frightful cry.

Woe! Defeated! Undone! Of wretches the wretchedest slave!

Contemplating the ring.

I own what makes me supreme, The mightiest lord of all lords!

[He puts on the ring.

Loge To Wotan.

Shall he go free?

Elotan

Loose his bonds.

Loge
Sets Alberich
quite free.

Slip away home, For no fetter binds thee! Fare forth, thou art free!

Alberich
Raising him
self, with
furious laughter.

Am I now free,
Free in truth?
My freedom's first
Greeting take, for it is thine!
As a curse gave me the ring,
My curse go with the ring!

As its gold

Gave measureless might, May now its magic

May now its magic
Deal death evermore!
No man shall gain
Gladness therefrom;
May ill-fortune befall him
On whom it shines.
Fretted by care
Be he who shall hold it,
And he who doth not,
By envy be gnawed!
All shall covet
And crave its wealth,
Yet none shall it profit

Or pay when won. Those who guard it nothing shall gain, Yet shall murder go where they go.

The coward, death-doomed, By fetters of fear shall be bound; His whole life long

He shall languish to death—
The ring's proud lord
And its poorest slave—
Till again I have

In my hand the gold I was robbed of.
So blesses

The Nibelung
The ring in bitter despair!
Hold fast to it!

[Laughing.

Keep it with care; [Grimly.

From my curse none shall escape!

[He vanishes quickly through the cleft. thick mist in the foreground gradually clears away.

Loge Hadst thou ears

For his fond farewell?

Grudge him not vent to his spleen! Matan

Lost in contemplation of the ring.

It keeps growing lighter.

Loac Looking to the

right.

Fasolt and Fafner Come from afar Bringing Freia again.

> Through the vanishing mift Donner, Froh, and Fricka appear, and hasten towards the foreground.

Froh

The giants return.

Monner

Be greeted, brother!

Fricka

Dost bring joyful tidings?

Anxiously to Wotan.

By fraud and by force Loge We have prevailed: Pointing to the hoard. There Freia's ransom lies.

Monner

From the giant's grasp Freed comes the fair one.

Froh

How sweetly the air Fans us again! Balmy delights

Steal soft through each sense!

Sad, forlorn had our lot been, For ever severed from her

Who gives us youth everlasting, And bliss triumphant o'er pain.

[Fasolt and Fasner enter, leading Freia hetween them. Fricka hastens joyfully towards her sister. The foreground has become quite bright again, the light restoring to the aspect of the Gods its original freshness. The background, however, is still veiled by the mist so that the distant castle remains invisible.

Fricka

Sweetest of sisters!
Lovely delight!
Once more for mine have I won thee!

Fasolt

Keeping her off.

Hold! Touch her not yet!
Freia still is ours.
On Riesenheim's
Rampart of rock
Resting we stayed.
The pledge we held
In our hands we used
Loyally.
With deep regret,
I bring her back now
In case ye brothers
Can ransom her.

Talatan

Prepared lies the ransom;
Mete out the gold,
Giving generous measure.

#asolt

In truth it grieves me
Greatly the woman to lose;
And that my heart may forget her
Ye must heap the hoard,
Pile it so high
That it shall hide

The blossom-sweet maid from mine eyes!

Whotan Be Freia's form

The gauge of the gold.

[Freia is placed in the middle by the two giants, who then flick their flaves into the ground in front of her so that her height and breadth is indicated.

Fafner Our staves give the measure

Of Freia's form;

Thus high now heap ye the hoard.

Western On with the work:

Irksome I find it!

Loge Help me, Froh!

Afroh I will end

Freia's dishonour.

[Loge and Froh heap up the treasure hastily

between the staves.

Fafner Let the pile

Less loosely be built; Firm and close

Pack ve the gauge!

[He preses down the treasure with rude frength; he bends down to look for gaps.

I still can see through; Come, fill up the crannies!

Hands off, rude fellow!

Touch nothing here!

Fafner Come here! This gap must be closed!

Turning away angrily.

Deep in my breast Burns the disgrace!

Africka See how in shame

Beautiful Freia stands;
For release she asks,

Dumb, with sorrowful eyes.

Heartless man!

The lovely one owes this to thee!

Fafner Still more! Pile on still more.

My patience fails;
Mad is the wrath

Roused by this insolent rogue!

Come hither, hound!

Measure must thou?

Thy strength then measure with mine!

Fafner Softly, Donner!

Roar where it serves; Thy roar is impotent here.

monner It will crush thee to thy cost, rogue.

Lunging out at him.

Wotan Calm thyself!

Methinks that Freia is hid.

Loge The hoard is spent.

Fafner Still shines to me Holda's hair.

Measures the Yonder thing, too, hoard carefully Throw on the hoard! with his eye, and looks to see if there are any crevices.

Loge Even the helm?

Fainer Make haste! Here with it!

Whotan Let it go also!

Logr

Throws the

Tarnhelm on the heap.

At last we have finished. Have ye enough now?

Fasolt

Freia, the fair,
Is hidden for aye!
The price has been paid.
Ah, have I lost her?

[He goes up to the hoard and peers through it.

Sadly shine

Her eyes on me still, Like stars they beam

Softly on me;

Still through this chink I look on their light.

[Beside himself.

While her sweet eyes I behold thus, From the woman how can I part?

Fafner

Hey! Come hither, And stop me this cranny!

Loos

Greedy grumblers!
Can ye not see
The gold is all gone?

.#afner

Not the whole, friend!
On Wotan's finger
Shines a golden ring still;
Give that to close up the crevice!

Motan

What! Give my ring?

Loge

Be ye counselled! The Rhine-Maidens Must have the gold;

Wotan will give them what theirs is.

Fainer. "Hey! Come hither,
And stop me this cranny!"
See p. 64



What nonsense is this?

The ring I won so hardly,

Undismayed I hold and will keep.

Loge Broken then

Must be the promise

I gave the maidens who grieved.

Witten By thy promise I am not bound;

As booty mine is the ring.

Fafner Not so. The ring

Must go with the ransom.

Whotan Boldly ask what ye will:

It shall be granted;

But not for all

The world would I give you the ring.

Fasolt

All is off!

Furious, pulls
Freia from behind the hoard.

The bargain stands: Fair Freia ours is for ever!

Freia Help me! Help me!

Fricka Heartless God,

Grant it! Give way!

Froh Keep not the gold back!

Monner Give them the ring too!

Let me alone!
I hold to the ring.

[Fafner stops Fasolt as he is hastening off.
All stand dismayed; Wotan turns from
them in anger. The stage has grown dark
again. From a cleft in the rock on one
side issues a bluish stame in which Erda
suddenly becomes visible, rising so that her
upper half is seen.

E

65

Erda

Stretching
out a warning
hand towards
Wotan.

Yield it, Wotan! Yield it! Flee the ring's dread curse!

Awful

And utter disaster

It will doom thee to.

Motan

What woman woe thus foretells?

Erda

All things that were I know,
And things that are;
All things that shall be
I foresee.
The endless world's

Ur-Wala,

Erda, bids thee beware.

Ere the earth was,
Of my womb born
Were daughters three;
And my knowledge

Nightly the Norns tell to Wotan.

Now summoned by Danger most dire, I myself come.

Hearken! Hearken! Hearken! All things will end shortly;

And for the Gods

Dark days are dawning!
Be counselled; keep not the ring!

[Erda finks slowly as far us the breaft, while the bluish light grows fainter.

Motan

A mystic might
Rang in thy words.
Tarry, and tell me further.

Etda
Disappearing.

Thou hast been warned; Enough dost know; Weigh my words with fear!

[She vanishes completely.

'Erda bids thee beware''
See p. 66



Motan

If thus doomed to foreboding—
I must detain thee
Till all is answered!

[Wotan is about to follow Erda in order to detain her. Froh and Fricka throw themselves in his way and prevent him.

Fricka

What meanest thou, madman?

Froh

Go not, Wotan! Fear thou the warner, Heed her words well!

[IV otan gazes thoughtfully before him.

Monner

Turning to the giants with a resolute air.

Hark, ye giants!
Come back and wait still!
The gold we give you also.

Fricka

Ah, dare I hope it?

Deem ye Holda

Worthy of such a price?

[All look at Wotan in suspense; he, roufing himself from deep thought, grasps his spear and swings it in token of having come to a bold decision.

Motan

To me, Freia,
For thou art free!
Bought back for aye,
Youth everlasting, return!
Here, giants, take ye the ring!

[He throws the ring on the hoard. The giants release Freia; she hastens joyfully to the Gods, who carefs her in turns for a space, with every manifestation of delight.

Fasolt
To Fafner.

Hold there, greedy one! Grant me my portion! Honest division Best for both is.

Fafner

More on the maid than the gold Thou wert set, love-sick fool, And much against Thy will the exchange was.

Sharing not, Freia

Thou wouldst have wooed for thy bride; Sharing the gold,

It is but just

That the most of it should be mine.

Fasolt

Infamous thief! Taunts? And to me!

To the Gods.

Come judge ve between us: Halve ve the hoard As seems to you just!

[Wotan turns away in contempt.

Loge

Let him have the treasure; Hold to what matters: the ring!

-#Fasolt

Back, brazen rascal! Falls upon Fafner, Mine is the Inches Smile. who has meanwhile been steadily packing up the treasure. [He snatches hastily at the ring.

Fafner

Off with thy hands! The ring is mine.

> [There is a struggle. Fasolt tears the ring from Fafner.

Fasolt

I hold it. It is mine now!

Fafner

Hold fast, lest it should fall!

[Lunging out with his stave, he fells Fasoh to the ground with one blow; from the dying man he then hastily tears the ring.

Fafner kills Fasolt See p. 68



Now feast upon Freia's smile: No more shalt thou touch the ring!

> He puts the ring into the sack and tranquilly continues to pack up the rest of the hoard. All the Gods stand horrified. A solemn silence.

Motan

Dread indeed

I find is the curse's might.

Loge

Unmatched, Wotan, Surely thy luck is! Great thy gain was In getting the ring; But the gain of its loss Is gain greater still: There thy foemen, see, Slaughter thy foes For the gold thou hast let go.

Motan

Dark forebodings oppress me!

Care and fear Fetter my soul; Erda must teach me, Tell how to end them: To her I must descend.

Fricka

Caressing and coaxing him.

Why linger, Wotan? Beckon they not, The stately walls, Waiting to offer Welcome kind to their lord?

Tellotan Gloomily. With wage accurst Paid was their cost.

Monner

Pointing to the background, which is still enveloped in mift.

Heavily mists Hang in the air; Gloomy, wearisome Is their weight! The wan-visaged clouds

69

THE RHINEGOLD

Charged with their storms I will gather, And sweep the blue heavens clean.

[Donner mounts a high rock on the edge of the precipice, and swings his hammer; during what follows the mifts gather round him.

Hey da! Hey da! Hey do!

To me, O ye mists!
Ye vapours, to me!
Donner, your lord,
Summons his hosts!

[He swings his hammer.

To my hammer's swing Hitherward sweep Vapours and fogs! Hovering mists!

Donner, your lord, summons his hosts! Hey da! Hey da! Hey do!

> [Donner disappears completely in a thundercloud which has been growing darker and denser. The stroke of his hammer is heard falling heavily on the rock. A vivid flash of lightning comes from the cloud, followed by a loud clap of thunder. Froh has also disappeared in the cloud.

Donner Invisible.

Brother, to me!
Show them the way by the bridge!

[Suddenly the clouds roll away. Donner and Froh become visible. A rainbow of dazzling radiance stretches from their feet across the valley to the castle, which is gleaming in the light of the setting sun.

IF voh

IV ho, with outfiretched hand,
indicates to the
Gods that the
bridge is the way
across the valley.

Lo, light, yet securely,
Leads the bridge to your halls.
Undaunted tread;
Without danger the road!

[Wotan and the other Gods stand speechless, lost in contemplation of the glorious sight.

"To my hammer's swing
Hitherward sweep
Vapours and fogs!
Hovering mists!
Denner, your lord, summons his hosts!"



THE RHINEGOLD

Matan

Smiling at eve The sun's eye sparkles; The castle ablaze

Gleams fair in its glow.
In the light of morning
Glittering proudly,

It stood masterless,

Stately, tempting its lord.

From dawn until sundown

No little toil

And fear have gone to the winning!
From envious night,
That now draws nigh

Shelter it offers us.

[Very firmly, as if struck by a great thought.

So greet I my home,

Safe from dismay and dread.

[He turns solemnly to Fricka.

Follow me, wife!
In Valhall sojourn with me.

Fricka

What means the name Valhall? I never seem to have heard it.

Matan

That which, conquering fear,
My fortitude brought
Triumphant to birth—
Let that explain the word!

[He takes Fricka's hand and walks slowly with her towards the bridge. Freh, Freia, and Donner follow.

Loge

Remaining in the foreground and looking after the Gods. They are hasting on to their end,
They who dream they are strong and
enduring.

I almost blush
To be of their number;

THE RHINEGOLD

A fancy allures me And wakes in me longing

Flaming fire to become:

To waste and burn them Who tamed me of old. Rather than perish, Blind with the blind—

Yes. even if godlike the Gods were -

More wise were it, perhaps!

I must consider:

The outcome who knows!

[With a show of carelessness he goes to join the Gods.

The Three Khine=Maidens From the

valler. Invilible. Rhinegold! Rhinegold!

Rhinegold pure! How radiant and clear

Once thou didst shine on us!

For thy lost glory We are grieving. Give us the gold! Give us the gold!

O give us the Rhinegold again!

Telotan

What wailing sound do I hear? About to set his foot on the bridge, pauses and turns round.

Loge

Looks down into the vailey.

The Rhine's fair children, Bewailing their lost gold, weep.

Telotan

Accursèd nixies! Bid them tease us no more!

Loue

Calling down towards the valley.

Ye in the water, Why wail ye to us? List to Wotan's decree.

The Rhine's fair children, Bewailing their lost gold, weep See p. 72



THE RHINEGOLD

Ye have seen
The last of the gold;
In the Gods' increase of splendour
Bask and sun yourselves now.

[The Gods laugh and cross the bridge during what follows.

The Three Rhine=Maidens

Rhinegold!
Rhinegold!
Rhinegold pure!
Oh, if in the waves
There but shone still our treasure pure!
Down in the deeps
Can faith be found only:
Mean and false

Are all who revel above!

[As the Gods cross the bridge to the castle

the curtain falls.







CHARACTERS

WOTAN HUNDING
FRICKA SIEGMUND

SIEGLINDE

BRÜNNHILDE, Valkyrie
EIGHT OTHER VALKYRIES:
Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute,
Schwertleite, Helmwige, Siegrune,
Grimgerde, Rossweisse

SCENES OF ACTION

ACT I. THE INTERIOR OF HUNDING'S DWELLING
ACT II. A WILD ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ACT III. ON THE TOP OF A ROCKY MOUNTAIN
(BRÜNNHILDE'S ROCK)





THE FIRST ACT

The interior of a dwelling-place built of wood, with the stem of a mighty ashtree as its centre; to the right, in the foreground, is the hearth, and behind this the store-room. At the back is the large entrance door; to the left, far back, steps lead up to an inner chamber; on the same side, nearer the front, stands a table with a broad bench behind it, fixed to the wall, and with stools in front. The stage remains empty for a space. Outside a storm is just subsiding. Siegmund opens the entrance door from without, and enters. With his hand on the latch he surveys the room. He seems overwhelmed with satigue; his dress and appearance indicate that he is in slight. He shuts the door behind him when he sees nobody, walks to the hearth with the final effort of an utterly exhausted man, and throws hims if down on a bearskin rug.

Siegmund.

I rest on this hearth, Heedless who owns it.

[He finks back and remains stretched out motionless. Sieglinde enters from the inner chamber; she thinks her husband has returned. Her grave look changes to one of surprise when she sees the stranger stretched out on the hearth,

Still at the

A stranger here! He must be questioned.

[Coming nearer.

What man came in And lies on the hearth?

[As Siegmani dies not move, the draws nearer dill and looks at him.

Way-worn, weary
He seems and spent.
Faints he from weariness?
Can he be sick?

[She bends over him, and listens.

He breathes still, his eyelids
Are sealed but in slumber.
Worthy, valiant his mien,
Though so worn he rests.

Siegmund
Suddenly raising his head.

A drink! A drink!

Sieglinde

I go to fetch it.

[She takes a drinking-horn and hurries out. She returns with it full, and affers it to Siegmund.

Lo, the water

Thy thirsting lips longed for:

Water brought at thy wish!

[Siegman I drinks, and hands her back the horn. As he signifies his thanks with a movement of the head, he gazes at her with growing interest.

Liegmund

Welcome the water! Quenched is my thirst. My weary load Lighter it makes; New courage it gives; Mine eyes that slept

Re-open glad on the world.
Who soothes and comforts me so?

Lieglinde

This house and this wife Belong to Hunding. Stay thou here as his guest; Tarry till he comes home.

Siegmund

Shelter he surely
Will grant a worn,
Wounded, weaponless stranger.

Sieglinde
With anxious haste. Quick, show me! Where are thy wounds?

Siegmund
Shakes himself
and springs up
briskly to a
sitting posture.

My wounds are slight, Scarce worthy remark; My limbs are well knit still, Whole and unharmed. If my spear and shield had but been Half so strong as my arm is, I had vanguished the foe: But in splinters were spear and shield. The horde of foemen Harassed me sore: Through storm and strife Spent was my force; But, faster than I from foemen, All my faintness has fled; Darkness fell deep on my lids, But now the sun again laughs.

Sieglinde

Goes to the storeroom, fills a horn with mead, and prof. This healing and honeyed fers it to Siegmund with Draught of mead friendly eagerness. Deign to accept from me.

Siegmund

Set it first to thy lips.

[Sieglinde fips from the horn and hands it back to him. Siegmund takes a long draught, regarding Sieglinde with increasing warmth. Still gazing, he takes the horn from his lips and lets it fink slowly, while his features express strong emotion. He sights deeply, and lowers his gaze gloomily to the ground.

Siegmund

Thou hast tended an ill-fated one!

In a trembling voice.

May all evil

Be turned from thee!

[He starts up quickly, and goes towards the the back.

I have been solaced By sweet repose: Onward now I must press.

Sieglinde

Who pursues thee so close at thy heels?

Turning round quickly.

Zicgmund Stops.

Bad luck pursues me, Everywhere follows; And where I linger Trouble still finds me:

Be thou preserved from its touch! I must not gaze but go.

[He strides hastily to the door and lifts the latch.

Lieglinde

Then tarry here!

Forgetting Misfortune thou canst not bring herself, calls To those who abide with it!

Impetuously after him.

Sieglinde.

"This healing and honeyed Draught of mead

Deign to accept from me."

Siegmund. "Set it first to thy lips."
See p. 79



Deeply moved, Hunding here will I wait for. remains flanding; he looks searchingly at Sieglinde, who, ashamed and sad, lowers her eyes. Returning, he leans against the hearth, his gaze fixed on Sieglinde, who continues silently embarrassed.

Sieglinde starts, listens and hears Hunding outside leading his horse to the stable. She hurries to the door and opens it. Hunding, armed with shield and spear, enters, but, perceiving Siegmund, pauses on the threshold. Hunding turns with a look of stern inquiry to Sieglinde.

Sieglinde
In answer to
Hunding's look.

On the hearth
Fainting I found
One whom need drove here.

Munding

Hast succoured him?

Bieglinde

I gave him, as a guest, Welcome and a drink.

Licomund
Regarding
Hunding firmly
and calmly.

Drink she gave,
Shelter too:
Wouldst therefore chide the woman?

Munding

Sacred is my hearth: Sacred hold thou my house.

[To Sieglinde, as he takes off his armour and hands it to her.

Set the meal for us men!

[Sieglinde hangs up the arms on the flem of the afth-tree, fetcher food and drink from the flore-room and sets supper on the table. Involuntarily she turns her gaze on Siegnand again.

ď

Wunding

Examining
Siegmund's
features keenly
and with amaze,
compares them
with Sieglinde's.
Afide.

How like to the woman!
In his eye as well
Gleams the guile of the serpent.

[He conceals his surprise, and turns with apparent unconcern to Siegmund.

Far, I trow,
Must thou have fared;
The man who rests here
Rode no horse:
What toilsome journey
Made thee so tired?

Liegmund

Through wood and meadow,
Thicket and moor,
Chased by the storm
And peril sore,
I ran by I know not what road.
I know as little
What goal it led to,
And I would gladly be told.

Munding
At table,
inviting
Siegmund
to be seated.

'Tis Hunding owns
The roof and room
Which have harboured thee.
If to the westward
Thou wert to wend,
In homesteads rich
Thou wouldst find kinsmen
Who guard the honour of Hunding.
May I ask of my guest
In return to tell me his name?

[Siegmund, who has taken his seat at the table, looks thoughtfully before him. Sieglinde, who has placed herself befide Hunding and opposite Siegmund, gazes at him with evident sympathy and suspense.

Hunding discovers the likeness between Siegmund and Sieglinde

See p. 62





Munding
Watching
them both.

If thou wilt not
Trust it to me,
To this woman tell thy secret:
See, how eagerly she asks!

Sieglinde
Unembarrasied
and interested.

Gladly I'd know Who thou art.

Siegmund
Looks up and,
gazing into
her eyes, begins
gravely.

Not for me the name Friedmund; Frohwalt fain were I called, But forced was I to be Wehwalt. Wölfe they called my father; And I am one of twins: With a sister twin I was born.

Soon lost were Both mother and maid; I hardly knew

Her who gave me my life, Nor her with whom I was born. Warlike and strong was Wölfe, And never wanting for foes.

A-hunting oft
Went the son with the father.
One day we returned
Outworn with the chase
And found the wolf's nest robbed.

The brave abode
To ashes was burnt,
Consumed to dust
The flourishing oak,
And dead was the mother,
Dauntless but slain.
No trace of the sister
Was ever found:

The Neidungs' heartless horde Had dealt us this bitter blow.

My father fled,
An outlaw with me;
And the youth
Lived wild in the forest
With Wölfe for many years.
Sore beset and harried were they,
But boldly battled the pair of wolves.

[Turning to Hunding.

A Wölfing tells thee the tale, And a well-known Wölfing, I trow.

Munding

Wondrous and wild the story
Told by thee, valiant guest:
Wehwalt—the Wölfing!
I think that dark rumours anent
This doughty pair have reached me,
Though unknown Wölfe
And Wölfing too.

Sieglinde

But tell me further, stranger: Where dwells thy father now?

Siegmund

The Neidungs, starting anew,
Hounded and hunted us down;
But slain by the wolves
Fell many a hunter;
They fled through the wood,
Chased by the game:
Like chaff we scattered the foe.
But trace of my father I lost;
Still his trail grew fainter
The longer I followed;
In the wood a wolf-skin
Was all I found;
There empty it lay:
My father I had lost.—
In the woods I could not stay;

My heart longed for men and for women.—

By all I met, No matter where, If friend I sought,

Or woman wooed,

Still I was branded an outlaw;

Ill-luck clung to me; Whatever I did right,

Others counted it wrong;

What seemed evil to me Won from others applause.

Grim feuds arose
Wherever I went;
Wrath met me
At every turn;
Longing for gladness,

Woe was my lot:
I called myself Wehwalt therefore,

For woe was all that was mine.

[His looks at Sieglinde and marks her sympathetic gaze.

Munding

Thou wert shown no grace by the Norns That cast thy grievous lot; No one greets thee as guest With gladness in his home.

Bieglinde

Only cowards would fear
A weaponless, lonely man!—
Tell us, O guest,
How in the strife
At last thy weapon was lost!

Siegmund

A sorrowful child Cried for my help; Her kinsmen wanted To wed the maiden

To one whom her heart did not choose.

To her defence
Gladly I hied;
The heartless horde
Met me in fight:
Before me foemen fell.
Fordone and dead lay the brothers.
The slain were embraced by the maid,
Her wrongs forgotten in grief.
She wept wild streams of woe,
And bathed the dead with her tears;
For the loss of her brothers slain
Lamented the ill-fated bride.

Then the dead men's kinsmen Came like a storm,
Vowing vengeance,
Frantic to fall on me;
Foemen on all sides
Rose and assailed me.
But from the spot
Moved not the maid;
My shield and spear
Sheltered her long,
Till spear and shield
Were hewn from my hand.

Standing weaponless, wounded, I beheld the maid die:
I fled from the furious host—
She lay lifeless on the dead.

[To Sieglinde with a look of fervent

The reason now I have told Why none may know me as Friedmund.

[He rises and walks to the hearth. Pale and deeply moved, Sieglinde looks on the ground.

Hunding Rises.

I know a wild-blooded breed; What others revere It flouts unawed:

All hate it, and I with the rest.

When forth in haste I was summoned,
Vengeance to seek
For my kinsmen's blood,
I came too late,
And now return home

To find the impious wretch In haven under my roof.— My house holds thee, Wölfing, to-day;

For the night thou art my guest.

But wield to-morrow

Thy trustiest weapon.

I choose the day for the fight: Thy life shall pay for the dead.

[To Sieglinde, who steps between the two men with anxious gestures; harshly.

Forth from the hall!
Linger not here!
Prepare my draught for the night,
And wait until I come.

[Sieglinde stands for a while undecided and thoughtful. Slowly and with hesitating sleps she goes towards the store-room. There she pauses again, lost in thought, her face half averted. IV ith quiet resolution she opens the cupboard, fills a drinking-horn, and shakes spices into it out of a box. She then turns her eyes on Siegmund, in order to meet his gaze, which he never removes from her. She perceives that Hunding is watching, and proceeds immediately to the bed-chamber. On the sleps she turns once more, looks yearningly at Siegmund, and indicates with her eyes, persistently and with speaking plainness, a particular spot in the stem of the ash-tree. Hunding starts, and drives her off with a violent gesture. With a last look at Siegmund, she disappears into the bed-chamber, and shuts the soor behind her.

Munding
Taking his
weapons from
the tree-flom.

With weapons man should be armed. We meet to-morrow then, Wölfing. My word thou hast heard; Ward thyself well!

[He goes into the bed-chamber. The shooting of the bolt is heard from within.

Ecomund alone. It has grown quite dark. All the light in the hall comes from a dull fire on the hearth. Siegmund finks down on to a couch beside the fire and broods for some time silently in great agitation.

Zicgmund

My father said when most wanted A sword I should find and wield.

Swordless I entered
My foeman's house,
As a hostage here
I remain.
I saw a fair
Woman and sweet,
And bliss and dread
Consume my heart.

The woman for whom I long—
She whose charm both wounds and delights—

In thrall is held by the man Who mocks a weaponless foe.

Wälse! Wälse!
Where is thy sword?—
The trusty sword
To be swung in battle,

When from my bosom should burst The fury that fills my heart?

[The fire collapses. From the flame which leaps up a bright light falls on the spot in the ash-tree's stem indicated by Sieglinde's look, and on which the hilt of a sword is now plainly visible.

Sieglinde prepares Hunding's draught for the night See p. 87



What can that be
That shines so bright?
What a ray streams
From the ash-tree's stem!
My eyes that saw not
See the bright flash;
Gay as laughter it gleams.
How the radiant light
Illumes my heart!
Is it the look
That lingered behind,
Yonder clinging,
When forth from the hall
The lovely woman went?

[From this point the fire gradually goes

Darkly the shadows
Covered my eyes,
Till her shining glance
Over me gleamed,
Bringing me warmth and day.

Gay and splendid
The sun appeared,
And blissfully circled
With glory my head—
Till by the hills it was hid.

[The fire flickers up faintly again.

But once more, ere it set, Bright it shone upon me, And the ancient ash-tree's stem Was lit by its golden glow.

The splendour passes, The light grows dim, Shadowy darkness Falls and enshrouds me;

Deep in my bosom's fastness Glimmers still faintly the flame!

> [The fire goes out altogether. Total darkness. The door of the bed-chamber opens noiselessly. Sieglinde comes out in a white garment and advances softly but quickly towards the hearth.

Sieglinde

Art asleep?

Ziegmund
Joyfully surprised.

Who steals this way?

Sieglinde With stealthy haste. 'Tis I: listen to me!
In sleep profound lies Hunding;
The draught that I mixed him I drugged.
Use to good purpose the night!

Eiegmund Thou here, all is well!

Ardently interrupting.

Sieglinde

I have come to show thee a weapon;
O couldst thou make it thine!
I then might call thee
First among heroes,
For only by him
Can it be won.

O hearken: heed what I tell thee! Here Hunding's kinsmen Sat in the hall,

Assembled to honour his wedding. He took as his wife, Against her will,

One who was bartered by thieves. Sad I sat there Through their carousing.

A stranger entered the hall, An old and grey-coated man. So slouched was his hat That one of his eyes was hidden;

But the other flashed
So that all feared it:
Overwhelming
Its menace they found;
I alone

Suffered, when looked on, Sweet pain, sad delight, Sorrow and solace in one.

On me glancing,
He scowled at the others,
As he swung a sword in his hands.

This sword he plunged
In the ash-tree's stem,
To the hilt driving it home.
The weapon he gains in guerdon
Who draws it from its place.

Though sore they struggled, Not one of the heroes Could win the weapon for his;

Coming, going,

The guests essayed it,
The strongest tugged at the steel;
Not an inch it stirred in the stem;
In silence yonder it cleaves.
I knew then who he was
That in sorrow greeted me.

I know too
Now for whom
The sword was stuck in the tree.

O might I to-day Find here the friend Brought from afar

By a woman's woe!
Then all I have suffered
In sorrow untold,
All scorn and all shame
In anger endured—
All would avenged be,
Sweetly atoned for—
Regained fully
The good I had lost;
For mine I should win
All I had wept for,
Could I but find the dear friend,
And clasp him close in my arms!

Eiegmund
Embracing
Sieglinde
with passionate
ardour.

Dear woman, that friend
Holds thee at last,
Both woman and sword are his.
Here in my breast
Burns hot the oath
That welds us twain into one.
For all that I sought

I see now in thee,
In thee all
That once failed me I find.
Thou wert despised,
My portion was pain;
I was an outlaw,
Dishonoured wert thou;
Sweet revenge beckons,
Bids us be joyful;
I laugh

From sheer fulness of joy, Holding thee, love, in my arms thus, Feeling the beat of thy heart!

The outer door swings open.

Sigglinde

With a flart

of alarm, tears

herself away.

Sirgmund
In soft ecstasy.

Ha, who went? Who entered there?

[The door remains open. Outside, a glorious spring night. The full moon shines in, throwing its bright light on the pair, so that they can suddenly see one another quite plainly.

No one went— But one has come: Laughing the spring Enters the hall!

> [He draws Sieglinde with tender force on to the couch, so that she fits befide him. The moon shines more and more brightly.

Winter storms have yielded To May's sweet moon, And mild and radiant Sparkles the spring. On balmy breezes Light and lovely, Weaving wonders, Soft she sways. Through field and forest She is breathing; Wide and open Laughs her eye;

When blithe the birds are singing Sounds her voice;
Fragrant odours
She exhales:

From her warm blood blossom flowers
Welcome and joyous.
Shoot and bud,
They wax by her aid.

With tender weapons armed,
She conquers the world.
Winter and storm yield
To the strong attack.

No wonder that, beaten boldly, At last the door should have opened, Which, stubborn and stiff, Was keeping her out. To find her sister Hither she came: By love has spring been allured: Within our bosoms Buried she lav: Now glad she laughs to the light. The bride who is sister Is freed by the brother: In ruin lies What held them apart. Loud rejoicing, They meet and greet: Lo! Love is mated with spring!

Dieglinde

Thou art the spring That I used to pine for, When pinched by the winter frost; My heart hailed thee friend With bliss and with fear. When thy first glance fell on me sweetly All I had seen appeared strange; Friendless were my surroundings; I never seemed to have known Any one who came nigh. Thee, however, Straightway I knew. And I saw thou wert mine When I beheld thee: What I hid in my heart, All I am, Clear as the day Dawned to my sight

Like tones to the ear
Echoing back,
When, upon my frosty desert,
My eyes first beheld a friend.

[She hangs enraptured on his neck, and looks him close in the face.

Ziegmund Transported. O rapture most blissful! Woman most blest!

Sieglinde Glose to his eyes. O let me, closer
And closer clinging,
Discern more clearly
The sacred light
That from thine eyes
And face shines forth,
And so sweetly sways every sense!

Siegmund,

The May-moon's light
Falls on thy face
Framed by masses
Of waving hair.
What snared my heart
'Tis easy to guess:
My gaze on loveliness feasts.

Lieglinde
Pushing the
hair back from
his brow,
regards him
with astonishment.

How broad and open
Is thy brow!
Blue-branching the veins
In thy temples entwine.
I hardly can endure
My burden of bliss.—
Of something I am reminded:—
The man I first saw to-day
Already I have seen!

A dream of love Sicamund

I too recall; I saw thee there

And yearned for thee sore!

The stream has shown me Sieglinde

> My imaged face-Again I see it before me;

As in the pool it arose It is reflected by thee.

Thine is the face Sicamund I hid in my heart.

O hush! That voice! Sicalinde

Quickly averting O let me listen! her gaze. These tones as a child

Surely I heard-

But no! I heard the sound lately.

When, calling in the wood, My voice re-echoing rang.

To sweet and melodious Sicgmund

Music I listen!

Sicalinde And ere now thy glowing Gazing into

Eve have I seen:

The old man whose glance

Solaced my grief,

When he greeted me had that eye-

I knew him

Because of his eye,

And almost addressed him as father.

After a pause.

Art thou Wehwalt in truth?

Ziegmund . If dear to thee, Wehwalt no more:

his eyes again.

My sway is o'er bliss not sorrow!

Sieglinde And Friedmund does not

Fit with thy fortunes.

Sigmund Choose thou the name

Thou wouldst have me be known by:

Thy choice will also be mine!

Sieglinde The name of thy father was Wölfe?

Sigmund A wolf to the fearful foxes!

But he whose eye

Shone with the brightness

Which, fairest one, shines in thine own,

Was named—Wälse of old.

Sieglinde Was Wälse thy father,

Beside herself. And art thou a Wälsung?-

Stuck was for thee

His sword in the stem?—
Then let my love call thee

What it has found thee;

Siegmund

Shall be thy name.

Diegmund
Springs up.

Siegmund call me
For Siegmund am I!
Be witness this sword
I grasp without shrinking!

That I should find it

In sorest need Wälse foretold.

I grasp it now! Love the most pure

In utmost need,

Passionate love, Consuming desire

Burning bright in my breast, Drive to deeds and death!

Nothung! Nothung!
That, sword, is thy name.
Nothung! Nothung!
Conquering steel!
Show me thy sharp
And sundering tooth:

Come forth from thy scabbard to me!

[He draws the sword with a violent effort from the stem of the tree and shows it to the amazed and enraptured Sieglinde.

Siegmund the Wälsung
Thou dost see!
As bride-gift
He brings thee this sword;
With this he frees
The woman most blest;
He bears thee
From the house of his foe.
Far from here
Follow thou him:
Forth to the laughing
House of the spring;
Thy shield be Nothung, the sword,
When Siegmund is captive to love!

[He throws his arm round her so as to draw her forth with him.

Sieglinde
Delirious with
excitement,
tears herself
away and
flands before
him.

Art thou Siegmund
Standing before me,
Sieglinde am I
Who longed for thee;
Thy own twin-sister
As well as the sword thou hast
won!

[She throws herself on his breaft.

Siegmund

Bride and sister
Be to thy brother—
So Wälsungs shall flourish for aye!

[He draws her to him with fervent passion. The curtain falls quickly.





THE SECOND ACT

A wild mountainous spot. In the background a gorge rises from below to a high ridge of rocks, from which the ground slopes down again towards the front. Wotan, in full armour, carrying his spear. Before him Brünnhilde as a Valkyrie, also fully armed.

Zaotan

Go bridle thy steed,
Valorous maid!
Bitter strife
Soon will break forth;
Brünnhilde, storm to the fray
And cause the Wälsung to win!
Hunding choose for himself
Where to bide:
No place in Walhall has he.
So up and to horse!
Haste to the field!

Brünnhilve
Ascends the
height on the
right, shouting
and springing
from rack
to rack.

Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Heiaha! Heiaha! Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Heiaha! Heiaha! Hojotoho! Hojotoho! 'Sicgmund the Wälsung
Thou dost see!
As bride-gift
He brings thee this sword"
See p. 98



Heiaha! Hojoho!

[She pauses on a high peak, looks down into the gorge and calls back to Wotan.

I warn thee, Father, See to thyself; Stern the strife

That is in store:

Here comes Fricka, thy wife, Drawn hither in her car by her rams,

> Swinging the golden Scourge in her hand! The wretched beasts Are groaning with fear;

And how the wheels rattle! Hot she hastes to the frav.

Such strife as this
No strife is for me,
Though I love boldly waged
Strife 'twixt men.

The battle alone thou must brave; I go; thou art left in the lurch!

Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Heiaha! Heiaha! Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Heiaha! Heiaha! Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha! Ha!

[She disappears behind the mountain peak at the fide. Fricka, in a car drawn by a pair of rams, has driven up the gorge to the mountain ridge, where she suddenly stops, alights and strides angrily towards Wotan in the foreground.

The usual strife!

The usual strife!

But I must act with firmness.

ECHotanA fide, when he sees Fricka
approaching.

Fricka

Moderating
her pace as she
approaches, and
confronting Wotan
with dignity.

All alone among the hills

I seek thee, where thou dost hide

Fearing the eyes Of thy wife,

That help in need thou may'st promise.

Matan

Let Fricka tell Her trouble in full.

Fricka

I have heard Hunding's cry,
For vengeance calling on me;
As wedlock's guardian
I gave ear:

I gave ear:
My word passed
To punish the deed
Of this impious pair
Who boldly wrought him the wrong.

Motan

Have this pair then
Done such harm,
Whom spring united in love?
'Twas love's sweet magic
That lured them on;
None pays for love's might to me.

Fricka

How dull and how deaf thou wouldst seem!
As though thou wert not aware
That it is wedlock's
Holy oath
Profaned so rudely I grieve for.

Talotan

Unholy
Hold I the bond
That binds unloving hearts;
Nor must thou
Imagine that I

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The second of th

Will restrain by force
What transcends thy power;
For where bold natures are stirring
I urge them frankly to strife.

Fricka

Deeming thus laudable
Wedlock's breach,
Pray babble more nonsense
And call it holy
That shame should blossom forth
From bond of a twin-born pair!
I shudder at heart,
My brain reels and whirls.
Sister embraced
As bride by the brother—
Who has ever heard
Of brother and sister as lovers?

Matan

Thou hearest it now!

Be taught by this

That a thing may be

Which has never befallen before.

That those two are lovers

Thou must admit;

So take advice and be wise!

Thy blessing surely

Will bring to thee gladness,

If thou wilt, laughing on love,

Bless Siegmund and Sieglinde's bond.

Fricka
With a
burst of deep
indignation.

Then nothing to thee Are the gods everlasting Since the wild Wälsungs Won thee for father? I speak plainly—
Is that thy thought?

The holy and high
Immortals are worthless;
And all that once
Was esteemed is thrown over;
The bonds thou didst bind
By thyself now are broken;
Heaven's hold

Is loosed with a laugh,
That this twin-born pair, unimpeded,
The fruit of thy lawless love,

May in wantonness flourish and rule!
But why wail over

Wedlock and vows,

Since by thee the first they are scorned!

The faithful wife

Betraved at each turn.

Lustfully longing Wander thy glances;

Thine eyes scan

Each hollow and height As thy fickle fancy allures thee.

While grief is gnawing my heart.

Heavy of soul
I had to endure it,
When to the fight
With the graceless maidens
Born out of wedlock,
Forth thou hast fared:

For, thy wife still holding in awe, Thou didst give her as maids The Valkyrie band To obedience bound.

Even Brünnhilde, bride of thy Wish.

But now that new names Afford thee new pleasure, And Wälse, wolfish, in Fricka approaches in anger

Sec 1 1/4



Forests has wandered;
Now that to bottomless
Shame thou hast stooped,
And a pair of mortals
Hast vilely begotten—
Now thy wife at the feet
Of whelps of a wolf thou dost fling!
Come finish thy work!
Fill the cup full!
Mock and trample now the betrayed one!

Echotan Quietly.

Thou couldst not learn,
Though I might teach thee;
To thee there is nothing plain
Till day has dawned on the deed,
Wonted things
Thou alone canst conceive,
Whereas my spirit broods
On things not yet brought forth.

Listen, woman!
Some one we need,
A hero gods have not shielded,
And who is not bound by their law.
So alone

Were he fit for the deed Which no god can accomplish, Yet which must be done for the gods.

Fricka

With sayings dark
Thou fain wouldst deceive me!
What deed by hero
Could be accomplished
That was beyond the strength of the gods,
By whose grace alone he is strong?

ZRotan

Then his own heart's courage Counts not at all?

Fricka

Who breathed their souls into men? Who opened their eyes, that they see?

Behind thy shield
Strong they appear;
With thee to goad them,
Upward they strive;
Those men that thou praisest.

Those men that thou praisest,
'Tis thou who spurrest them on.

With falsehoods fresh
Thou wouldst fain delude me,
With new devices
Thou wouldst evade me;
Thou shalt not shelter
The Wälsung from me;
He lives only through thee,
And is bold through thee alone.

With emotion

He grew unaided
In grievous distress;
My shield sheltered him not.

Fricka

Then shield him not to-day;
Take back the sword
That thou hast bestowed.

Motan

The sword?

Fricka

Yes, the sword,
The magic sword
Sudden and strong
That thou gavest to thy son.

Unsteadily.

Nay, Siegmund won it Himself in his need.

[From here Wotan's whole attitude expresses an ever-deepening uneasiness and gloom.

Fricka

Continuing

passionately.

Both conquering sword
And the need came from thee.
Wouldst thou deceive me
Who, day and night,
At thy heels follow close?
For him thou didst strike
The sword in the stem;
Thou didst promise him
The peerless blade.
Canst thou deny
That thy cunning it was
Which led him where it lay hid?

[Wotan makes a wrathful gesture. Fricka goes on more and more considently as she sees the impression produced on him.

The Gods
Do not battle with bondsmen;
The free but punish transgressors.
Against thee, my peer,
Have I waged war,
But Siegmund is mine as my slave.

[Another violent gesture from Wotan, who then seems to succumb to the feeling of his own powerlesness.

Shall thy eternal
Consort obey one
Who calls thee master
And bows as thy slave?
What! Shall I be
Despised by the basest,
To the lawless a spur,
A scoff to the free?
My husband cannot desire me,
A goddess, to suffer such shame!

Exactan

Gloomily.

What then wouldst thou?

Fricka Shield not the Wälsung.

Westan
In a muffled voice.

His way let him go.

Fricka Thou wilt grant him no aid,
When to arms the avenger calls?

Whotan I shield him no more.

Fricka Seek not to trick me;
Look in my eyes!

The Valkyrie turn from him too.

The Valkyrie free shall choose.

Fricka Not so; she but acts
To accomplish thy will;

Give order that Siegmund die.

After a violent internal struggle.

Nay, slay him I cannot,
He found my sword!

Fricka Remove thou the magic,
And shatter the blade:
Swordless let him be found.

Brünnhilde Heiaha! Heiaha!

Is heard Hojotoho!

calling from Heiaha! Heiaha!

the heights. Heiohotojo! Hotojoha!

JFricka Thy valorous maiden comes; Shouting, hither she rides.

Whotan For Siegmund I called her to horse.

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[Brünnkilde appears with her horse on the rocky path to the right. When she sees Fricka she flops abruptly and, during the following, slowly and filently leads her horse down the path. She then puts it in a cave.

Fricka

By her shield to-day Be guarded the honour

Of thy eternal spouse! Derided by men, Shorn of our power,

Perish and pass would the Gods

If thy valiant maid Avenged not to-day

My sacred and sovereign right. The Wälsung falls for my honour. Does Wotan now pledge me his oath?

Matan

Throwing himself on to a rocky seat in terrible dejection. Take the oath !

[Fricka strides towards the back, where she meets Brünnhilde and halts for a moment before her.

Fricka

Warfather Waits for thee: He will instruct thee How the lot is decreed!

[She drives off quickly.

Brunnhilde

Comes forward anxious and wondering to Wotan. who, leaning back on his rocky seat,

Ill closed

The fight, I fear;

Fricka laughs at the outcome! Father, what news

Hast thou to tell me? is brooding gloomily. Sad thou seemest and troubled!

Motan

By self-forged fetters

I am bound.

Dropping his I, least free of all living! arm helplessly and finking his head on his breaft.

Brunnhilde

I know thee not thus: What gnaws at thy heart? IOQ

Motan

His expression and gestures working up, from this point, to a fearful outburst.

O sacrilege vile! O grievous affront! Gods' despair! Gods' despair! Infinite wrath! Woe without end!

Most sorrowful I of all living !

Brüunhilde

Alarmed, throws her shield, spear and helmet from her and kneels with anxious affection at his feet.

Father I Father! Tell me what ails thee? With dismay thou art filling thy child! Confide in me

For I am true; See, Brünnhilde begs it!

> She lays her head and hands with tender anxiety on his knees and breaft.

Walotan

Looks long in her eyes, then

What if, when uttered. Weaker it made

The controlling might of my will? strokes her hair with involuntary tenderness. As if coming out of a deep reverie, he at last begins, very softly.

Brünnhilde

Very softly.

To Wotan's will thou speakest When thou speakest to me?

> What am I If I am not thy will?

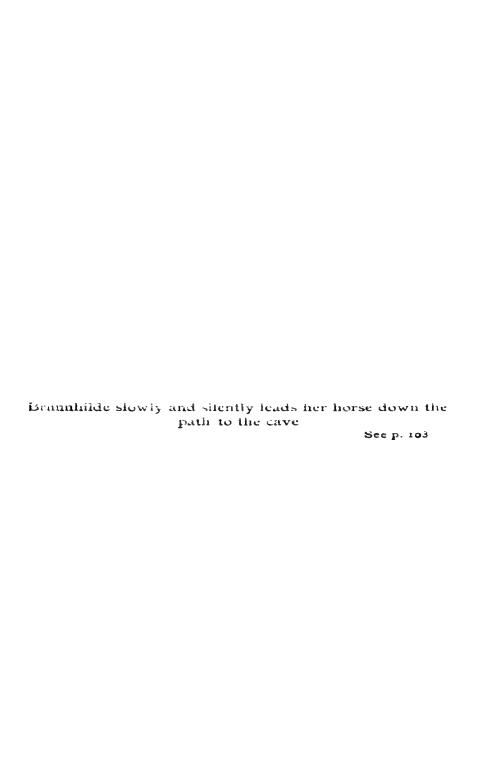
7.7Lotan Very softly.

What never to any was spoken Shall be unspoken now and for ever.

> Myself I speak to, Speaking to thee.

In a low, muffled voice.

When young love grew A waning delight, 'Twas power my spirit craved; By rash and wild Desires driven on,





I won myself the world.

Unknown to me Dishonest my acts were;

Bargains I made Wherein hid mishap,

Craftily lured on by Loge, Who straightway disappeared.

Yet I could not leave Love altogether:

When grown mighty still I desired it.

The child of night, The craven Nibelung,

Alberich, broke from its bond.

All love he forswore,

And procured by the curse

The gleaming gold of the Rhine, And with it measureless might.

The ring that he wrought I stole by my cunning, But I restored it not To the Rhine; It paid the price Of Walhall's towers:

The home the giants had built me, From which I commanded the world.

> She who knows all That ever was, Erda, the holy, All-knowing Wala,

Warned me touching the ring:

Prophesied doom everlasting.
Of this doom I was fain

Of this doom I was fair To hear further.

But silent she vanished from sight. Then my gladness of heart was gone, The god's one desire was to know.

To the womb of the earth
Downward then I went:
By love's sweet magic
Vanquished the Wala,
Troubled her wisdom proud,
And compelled her tongue to speak.
Tidings by her I was told;
And with her I left a fair pledge:
The world's wisest of women
Bore me, Brünnhilde, thee.

With eight sisters
Fostered wert thou,
That ye Valkyries
Might avert the doom
Which the Wala's
Dread words foretold:

The gods' ignominious ending.
That foes might find us
Strong for the strife.

Heroes I got ye to gather.

The beings who served us
As slaves aforetime,
The men whose courage
Aforetime we curbed:
Who through treacherous bonds
And devious dealings
Were bound to the gods
In blindfold obedience—
To kindle these men
To strife was your duty,
To drive them on
To savage war,

That hosts of dauntless heroes Might gather in Walhall's hall.

Brunnhilde

And well filled surely thy halls were; Many a one I have brought.

"Father! Father!
Tell me what ails thee?
With dismay thou art filling thy child!"
See p. 110



We never were idle, So why shouldst thou fear?

TEAotan

His voice

muffled again.

Another ill—
Mark what I say—
Was by the Wala foretold!
Through Alberich's hosts
Doom may befall us;
A furious grudge
Alberich bears me;
But now that my heroes
Make victory certain
I defy the hosts of the night.
Only if he won
The ring again from me,
Walhall were forfeit for ever.

Used by him alone
Who love forswore
Could the runes of the ring
Bring doom
To the mighty gods,
And shame without end.
My heroes' valour
He would pervert,
Would stir to strife
The bold ones themselves,
And with their strength
Wage war upon me.
So, alarmed, I resolved

To wrest the ring from the foeman.

[In a low voice.

I once paid Fafner,
One of the giants,
With gold accurst
For work achieved.
Fafner guards now the hoard

For which his own brother he slew. The ring I must needs recover With which his work I rewarded.

But I cannot strike one By treaties protected; Vanquished by him My valour would fail. These are the bonds That bind my power; ho by treaties am lord,

I, who by treaties am lord, To my treaties also am slave.

But what I dare not
One man may dare—
A hero never
Helped by my favour,
To me unknown
And granted no grace,
Unaware,
Bidden by none,
Constrained thereto
By his own distress—
He could achieve
What I must not do:

The deed I never urged, Though it was all my desire.

But, alas! how to find
One to fight me, the god,
For my good—
Most friendly of foes!
How fashion the free one
By me unshielded,
In his proud defiance
Most precious to me?
How get me the other
Who, not through me,
But of himself

Will perform my will?

O woe of the gods!

Horrible shame!

Soul-sick am I

Of seeing myself

In all I ever created.

The other whom I so long for,

That other I never find.

The free by themselves must be fashioned,

All that I fashion are slaves!

Brünnhilde

But the Wälsung, Siegmund, Works for himself.

Matan

Wild I roamed
In the woodland with him,
Ever against the gods
Goading him to rebel.

[Slowly and bitterly.

Now, when the gods seek vengeance, Shield he has none but the sword

Given to him
By the grace of a god.
Why did I try
To trick myself vainly?
How easily Fricka
Found out the fraud!
She read my inmost
Heart to my shame.

I must bend my will to her wishes.

Brünnhilde

Of victory wouldst Siegmund deprive?

Matan

I have handled Alberich's ring,
Loth to let the gold go.
The curse that I fled
Is following me:

I must always lose what I love most, Slay what my heart holds dearest,

Basely betray
All those who trust.

[His gestures, at first those of terrible grief, end by expressing despair.

Pale then and pass Glory and pomp, Godhead's resplendent, Glittering shame! In ruins fall

The fabric I built!

Ended is my work;

I wait but one thing more:

The downfall— The downfall!

[He pauses thoughtfully.

And for the downfall Schemes Alberich! Now I see

The sense hidden

In the strange, wild words of the Wala: "When the gloomy foe of love

Gets a son in his wrath,

The high gods' doom Shall be at hand!"

Not long ago

A rumour I heard

That the dwarf had won a woman, By gold gaining her grace.

A woman bears
Hate's bitter fruit;
The child of spite
Grows in her womb;
This marvel befell
The man who loved not;

But I, the loving wooer, Have never begotten the free.

[Rising in bitter wrath

Accept thou my blessing, Nibelung son! I leave to thee What I loathe with deep loathing:

The hollow pomp of the gods. Consume it with envious greed!

Brünnhilve

O say! tell me What task is thy child's?

UAotan *Bitterly*. Fight, faithful to Fricka;
Wedlock and vows defend!
What she desires
Is also my choice,
For what does my own will profit,
Since it cannot fashion a free one?
For Fricka's slaves
Do battle henceforth!

Brünnhilde

Ah repent,
And take back thy word!
Thou lovest,
And fain, I know,
Wouldst have me shelter the Wälsung.

717Hotan

Siegmund thou shalt vanquish, And fight so that Hunding prevails.

Ward thyself well
And doughtily do,
Bring all thy boldness
To bear on the field;
A strong sword
Swings Siegmund;
Undismayed he will fight!

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Brünnhilde

He whom thou still
Hast taught me to love,
He whose courage high
To thy heart was so precious—
I will shield him in spite of
Thy wavering word!

Matan

Ha, daring one!
Floutest thou me?
Who art thou—who but the choiceless,
Blind slave of my will?
I have sunk so low
By showing my mind,
That the creature made by me
Holds me in scorn.

Dost thou, child, know my wrath?

If ever its awful

Lightning struck thee

Then quail wouldst thou indeed!
Within my bosom
Burns enough rage

To lay waste
In dread ruin a world
That once wore nothing but smiles.

Woe to him whom it strikes!

Dear the price he would pay! So be advised.

Call it not forth

But carry out my commands. Cut down Siegmund!

That is the Valkyrie's task.

[He storms away and disappears among the rocks to the left.

Brünnhilde stands for a long time dazed and alarmed See p. 119



Brünnhilbe Stands for a long time dazed and alarmed.

Warfather Oft have I seen

Enraged, but never once like this!

[She stoops down sadly, takes up her armour and puts it on again.

How heavy
My armour feels!
And it felt so light
When gladly I fought!
I fight afraid.
Evil is my cause!

[She gazes thoughtfully before her.

Woe! My Wälsung!
With sorrow sore
Must the faithful one falsely forsake thee!

[She turns slowly towards the back.

On reaching the rocky pass, Brünnhilde, looking down into the gorge, perceives Siegmund and Sieglinde. She watches them for a moment, then turns into the cave where her horse is, so that she is completely hidden from the audience. Siegmund and Sieglinde appear on the pass, Sieglinde hurrying in front. Siegmund tries to stop her.

Siegmund

Wait here and rest; Tarry a while!

Sieglinde

Farther! Farther!

Siegmund
Embraces her
with tender
force, straining
her to him.

No farther now!
O linger, woman most sweet!
From bliss when most blissful
Breaking away,
In headlong haste
Far thou hast fled,

So fleet that I lagged behind:
Through wood and field,
Over cliff and scaur,
Voiceless, silent,
Speeding along,
Thy foot stopped for no call.

[Sieglinde stares wildly before her.

Tarry a while!
Say but a word,
Ending this speechless dread!
See, thy brother
Holds thee, his bride:
Siegmund's comrade art thou!

Sieglinut
Gazes into his
eyes with
growing rapture, throws
her arms
passionately
round his neck
and remains
so for some time.
She then starts
up in wild
terror.

Away ! Awav! Fly the profaned one! Unholy The clasp of her arm; In shame, dishonoured, This body died. Fling it from thee, Flee from the corpse! The winds scatter her dust-The foul one who loved one so fair ! When in his loving embrace She rested in rapture pure. And all the love of the man Was hers who loved him alone-When on holiest height, When bliss was at sweetest,

And sense and soul
Were steeped in delight,
Hatred and loathing
Of hideous dishonour
Shook the disgraced one,
Filled her with fear—

The thought she once had obeyed. Bridegroom unloving, unloved.

Leave the accurst one,
Far let her fly!
An outcast she is,
Bereft of grace!
Ah, I must leave
The purest of heroes;
I cannot be thine,
To sully thy glory:

Scorn to bring on the brother, Shame to the rescuing friend!

Diegmund

For the shame and dishonour,

Pay the transgressor's blood!

No farther, then, flying,
Here let us wait him;

Here—here I shall slay him:

When Nothung's point
Shall pierce his heart,
All thy wrongs will be avenged!

Sieglinde Starts up and listens. Hark! The bugles!
Dost thou not hear?
All around,
Angry and shrill,
From wood and vale
Clamour their calls.
Hunding has wakened
From slumber deep;
Kinsmen and hounds
He summons together;
How the dogs howl,
Urged on hotly,

Loud-baying to heaven
Of the vows and the wedlock profaned!

[Gazes before her as if gone crazed.

Where art thou, Siegmund?
Art thou still here,
Fervently loved one,
Beautiful brother?
Let thine eyes like stars
Shine again on me softly;
Turn not away
From the outcast woman's kiss!

[She throws herself sobbing on his breast, and presently starts up in terror again.

Hark! O hark! That is Hunding's horn! With his hounds full force. In haste he comes. No sword helps When the dogs attack:-Throw it down, Siegmund! Siegmund, where art thou? Ha, there! I see thee now! Horrible sight! Eager-fanged Are the bloodhounds for flesh; Ah, what to them Is thy noble air! By the feet they seize thee With terrible teeth; Alas!

Thou fallest with splintered sword:—
The ash-tree sinks—
The trunk is rent!
Brother! My brother!
Siegmund—ha!

[She falls fainting into his arms.

Brünnhilde with her horse, at the mouth of the cave See p. 123



Siegmund

Sister! Beloved!

He listens to her breathing, and, when convinced that she still lives, lets her slide down so that, as he himself finks into a sitting posture, her head rests upon his knees. In this position both remain till the end of the following scene. A long filence, during which Siegmund bends over Sieglinde with tender concern, and presses a long kiss on her brow.

Brunnhilde, leading her horse, comes out of the cave and walks slowly and solemnly towards the front. She pauses and watches Siegmund from a distance, then advances slowly again and stops when she gets nearer. In one hand she carries her shield and spear, the other rests on her horse's neck, and thus she gravely stands looking at Siegmund.

Brunnhilde

Siegmund! Look on me Whom thou Must follow soon!

Diegmund

Who art thou, say, Looking up at her. That dost stand so fair and so stern?

Brunnhiloe

Death-doomed are they Who look upon me;

Who sees me

Bids farewell to the light of life. On the battle-field only Heroes view me: He whom I greet

Is chosen and must go.

Diegmund

Looks into her

When thou dost lead, Whither follows the hero? eyes with a long steadfast and searching gaze, then bows his head in thought and finally turns resolutely to her again.

I lead thee Brünntilbe

To Wotan;

The lot he has cast: To Walhall must thou come.

In Walhall's hall Diegmund

Wotan alone shall I find?

A glorious host Brunnhilde

Of heroes slain

Will greet thee there With love holy and high.

Sav if in Walhall Siegmund

Sojourns my father, Wälse.

Brünnhilde His father there

Will the Wälsung find.

Siegmund Will any woman Tenderly.

Welcome me there?

Wishmaidens Brünnbilde

Serve there serene: Wotan's daughter

Wine will bring for thy cup.

Diegmund High art thou

And holy of aspect, O Wotan's child:

But one thing tell me, divine one!

The sister and bride,

Shall she follow the brother?

Will Siegmund find Sieglinde there?

Brunnhilbe Air of earth

Still she must breathe here;

Siegmund will find no Sieglinde there!

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Siegmund
Bends tenderly
over Sieglinde,
kisses her softly
on the brow,
and turns again
quietly to
Brünnhilde.

Then greet for me Walhall,
Greet for me Wotan,
Greet for me Wälse
And all the heroes,
Wishmaidens lovely
Greet thou also,
And tell them I will not come!

Brunnhilde

Nay, having looked On the Valkyrie's face, Thou must follow her forth!

Diegmund

Where Sieglinde dwells
In weal or woe,
There will Siegmund dwell also;
My face grew not pale
When I beheld thee:
Thou canst not force me to go!

Brünnhilde

Force thee can none
While thou dost live;
Fool, what will force thee is death:

Warning of death Is what I bring.

Diegmund

What hero to-day Shall hew me down?

Brunnhilde

Hunding's hand in the fight.

Biegmund'

Use threats more baleful
Than blows from Hunding!
Lurkest thou here
Longing for strife,
Fix on him for thy prey.
I think it is he who will fall!

Brünnhilde

Nay, Wälsung, Doubt not my word; Thine is the death decreed.

Diegmund

Knowest this sword? Who gave the sword Gave triumph sure:

With this sword I laugh at thy threats.

Brünnhilde
In a loud voice.

He whose it was Now dooms thee to death, For the magic spell he withdraws!

Ziegmund Pchemently.

Hush! Alarm not The slumberer here!

[In an outburst of grief he bends tenderly over Sieglinde.

Woe! Woe!

Woman most sweet!

Most sad and ill-starred of all true ones!

Against thee rages

The whole world in arms, And I who was all thy defence,

For whom thou the world hast defied -

To think I cannot Shield thee, but, beaten

In battle, thy trust must betray!

O shame on him

Who bestowed the sword,

And triumph now turns to scorn!

If I must fall thus,
I fare to no Walhall—

Hella hold me for aye!

[He bends low over Sieglinde.

Brünnhilde Moved.

So little prizest thou Life everlasting?

[Slowly and with hesitation.

All thy care

Is thy helpless wife

Who, sad and weary,

Heavily hangs in thy arms? Precious only is she?

Siegmund

Looking up at
her bitterly.

Though young and fair
Thou shinest to me,
In my heart I know thee
Cruel and cold!
Canst thou do nothing
But mock me, begone,
Malicious, merciless maid!
Or if thou must gloat
Upon my distress,
Then gloat and feast thyself full!
With my woe
Solace thy envious soul:—
But of Walhall's loveless raptures
Nothing more let me hear!

Brunnhilde

I see the distress
That is tearing thy heart;
The doomed hero's holy
Sorrow I feel.
Siegmund, thy wife be my charge,
Protected safely by me.

Siegmund.

No other than I
While my wife is living shall guard her.
If death be my lot
I will slay the slumberer first!

Brünnhilde
IV ith
increasing
emotion.

Wälsung! Madman!
Listen to me!
Entrust her to me
For the pledge's sake
That she carries of thee and thy love!

Siegmund

Drawing his sword.

This sword

That a true man received from a false—

This sword

That fails me when facing the foe; Worthless when turned on the foe, Will serve me when turned on the friend.

[He points the sword at Sieglinde.

Two lives now
Laugh to thee here:
Take them, Nothung,
Envious steel!

Take them with one fell stroke!

Brünnhilde
With a passionate
outburst of sympathy.

Forbear, Wälsung! Listen to me! Sieglinde spare thou,

And Siegmund too shall be spared!

'Tis thus decreed,
Recast the lot is!
Thou, Siegmund,
Shalt be blest and prevail!

Horns are heard in the distance.

Hark to the horn!
Prepare for the fray;
Trust to the sword
And strike without fear:
Thy sword shall prove strong

Thee the Valkyrie faithfully shields I

Farewell, Siegmund, Hero most blest!

On the field again I shall find thee.

[She rushes away and disappears with her horse down a gorge on the right. Siegmund gazes after her joyful and exustant. The stage has gradually grown dark. Heavy storm-clouds have gathered in the backgrowed, and hide the cliffs, gorge, and rocky pass completely from view.

Ziegmund

Bending over

Sieglinde, listens

to her breathing.

Charmèd slumber Softly soothes

The dear one's pain and grief.
When the Valkyrie came, perchance
She brought her this blissful repose;
Else would the grimly fought fight
Have terrified one in such woe.

Lifeless seems she,
And yet she lives;
The sad one by smiling
Dreams is caressed.
In slumber lie soft
Till the fight is won

And peace shall end thy pain!

[He lays her gently on the rocky seat and kifses her brow in farewell. Then, hearing Hunding's horn sound, he flarts up with resolution.

Thou who dost call, Arm for the fray; Thy dues in full Thou shalt have:

[He draws his sword.

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Nothung pays him his debt.

[He hastens to the back and, on reaching the pass, immediately disappears in a dark thunder-cloud, from which, the next instant, a flash of lightning breaks.

Bieglinde
Begins to move
uneasily in her
dreams.

Would but my father come back!
With the boy he still roams in the wood.

Mother! Mother!
I am afraid—
The strangers seem
So harsh and unfriendly!
Fumes that stifle—

Dense and black smoke—Fierce are the flames,
And closer they flare—On fire the house!
O help us, brother!
Siegmund! Siegmund!

[She flarts up. Violent thunder and lightning. Siegmund! Ha!

[She stares about her in growing terror.

Almost the whole of the stage is veiled by black thunder-clouds. Hunding's horn is

Hunding's boice From the

From the mountain pass in the background.

Wehwalt! Wehwalt!
Stand there and fight,
Or with the hounds I will hold thee!

heard close at hand.

Eicgmund's voice From farther back in the gorge.

Zieglinde
Listening in
terrible fear.

Where hidest thou,
That I have missed thee thus?
Halt, that I may find thee!

Hunding—Siegmund—Could I but see them !

Munding

Come hither, impious wooer! Here by Fricka be slain!

Siegmund
Also from the pass now.

Thou thinkest me weaponless,
Coward, still.
Threat not with women!
Thyself now fight me,
Lest Fricka fail thee at need!
For see, from the tree
That grows by thy hearth
I drew undaunted the sword;
Come and try the taste of its steel!

Lieglinde
With all her
strength.

Hold your hands, ye men there! Strike me dead first!

[She rushes towards the pass, but is suddenly dazzled by a light which flashes forth from above the combatants to the right, and staggers aside as if blinded.

Brunnhilde's boice

Strike him, Siegmund! Trust to the sword!

[Brünnhilde appears in the glare of light, floating above Siegmund, and protecting him with her shield. Just as Siegmund is aiming a deadly blow at Hunding a glowing red light breaks through the clouds from the left, in which Wotan appears, standing over Hunding and holding his spear across in front of Siegmund.

Motan's boice

Back! Back from the spear! In splinters the sword!

Brünnhilde with her shield recoils in terror before Wotan; Siegmund's sword breaks in splinters on the outstretched spear. Hunding plunges his sword into the disarmed man's breast. Siegmund falls down dead, and Sieglinde, who has heard his death-sigh, sinks to the ground as if lifeless. With Siegmund's fall the lights on both sides disappear. Dense clouds shroud all but the foreground in darkness. Through these Brünnhilde is dimly seen turning in wild haste to Sieglinde.

Brünnhilde

To horse, that I may save thee !

She lifts Sieglinde up quickly on to her horse, which is standing near the side ravine, and immediately disappears. Thereupon the clouds divide in the middle, so that Hunding, who has just drawn his sword out of Siegmund's breast, is distinctly seen. Wotan, surrounded by clouds, stands on a rock behind, leaning on his spear and gazing sorrowfully on Siegmund's body.

Udotan
To Hunding.

Begone, slave !

Kneel before Fricka;

Tell her that Wotan's spear

Has slain what mocked her might.

Go! Go!

[Before the contemptuous wave of his hand Hunding falls dead to the ground. Suddenly breaking out in terrible anger.

But Brünnhilde!
Woe to the guilty one!
Woe to her
As soon as my horse
Shall overtake her in flight!

[He vanishes with thunder and lightning. The curtain falls quickly.





THE THIRD ACT

On the top of a rocky mountain

On the right the stage is bounded by a pine-wood. On the left is the entrance to a cave, above which the rock rises to its highest point. At the back the view is quite open. Rocks of varying heights form the edge of the precipice. Clouds fly at intervals past the mountain peak as if driven by storm. Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltrante, and Schwertleite have taken up their position on the rocky peak above the cave. They are in full armour.

Gerhilde

On the highest point, calling towards the background, where a dense cloud is passing.

Melmwige's voice
At the back.

Gethilde, UNaltraute, and Schwertleite Calling to her as she draws near. Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Heiaha! Heiaha! Helmwige! Here! Guide hither thy horse!

Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

[A flash of lightning comes from the cloud, showing a Valkyrie on horseback, on whose saddle hangs a slain warrior. The apparition, approaching the cliff, passes from left to right.

Heiaha! Heiaha!

[The cloud with the apparition vani/hes to the right behind the wood.

Prtlinde. Calling into the wood.

Thy stallion make fast By Ortlinde's mare: Gladly my grey Will graze by thy chestnut !

Maltraute

Galling towards the wood. Who hangs at thy saddle?

Welmwige.

Coming out of the wood.

Sintolt, the Hegeling !

Schwertleite

Fasten thy chestnut Far from the grey then; Ortlinde's mare Carries Wittig, the Irming !

Gerhilde Descending a little towards the others.

Laughing aloud

And Sintolt and Wittig Always were foemen !

Prtlinde.

Heiaha! Heiaha! Springs up and The horse is kicking my mare ! runs to the wood.

Gerhilde

The heroes' feud Makes foes of the horses ! with Helmwige and Schwertleite.

Welmwige Calling back into the wood.

Quiet, Brownie! Pick not a quarrel.

EHaltraute

Hojoho! Hojoho! Siegrune, come!

On the highest point, where

What keeps thee so long? listening towards the right she has taken Gerhilde's place us watcher, calling towards the right-hand side of the background.

Ziegrune's boice

From the back on the right.

Work to do. Are the others all there?

The Valkpries

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

In answer, their

Heiaha! Heiaha!

gestures, as well as a bright light behind the wood, showing that Siegrune has just arrived there.

Grimgerde's and

Towards the left.

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Rossweisse's voices
From the back on the left.

Maltraute

Grimgerd' and Rossweisse !

Gerhilde

Together they ride.

[In a cloud which passes across the stage from the left, and from which lightning stashes, Rossweisse and Grimgerde appear, also on horseback, each carrying a stain warrior on her saddle.

Melmwige, Ortlinde, and Siegrune

We greet you, valiant ones! Rossweiss' and Grimgerde!

Have come out of the wood and wave their hands from the edge of the precipice to Rossweisse and Grimgerde, who disappear behind the wood.

Rossweisse's and Grimgerde's voices Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha !

All the other Valkyries

Hojotoho! Hojotoho! Heiaha! Heiaha!

Gerhilde

Calling into the wood.

Your horses lead into The wood to rest!

Ortlinde

Also calling into
the wood.

Lead the mares far off One from the other, Until our heroes' Anger is laid!

Delmwige
The others laughing

The grey has paid For the heroes' anger.

Roggineigge

and Grimgerde

Hoiotoho! Hojotoho!

Coming out of the wood.

The Walkpries

Be welcomed! Be welcomed!

Schwertleite

Went ve twain on one quest?

Erimgerde

No, singly we rode, And met but to-day.

Kasmeisse.

If we all are assembled Why linger longer? To Walhall let us away. Bringing to Wotan the slain.

Welmwige

We are but eight; Wanting is one.

Gerhilde

By the brown-eyed Wälsung

Brünnhilde tarries.

Waltraute

Until she joins us Here we must wait; Warfather's greeting Grim were indeed If we returned without her!

Siearune

On the look-out. calling towards the back.

Hojotoho! Hojotoho! This way! This way!

To the others.

In hottest haste riding, Hither she comes.

The Valkpries

All hasten to the look-out.

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha!

Brünnhilde, hei!

They watch her with growing astonishment. 136

Waltraute See, she leads woodward

Her staggering horse.

Grimgerde From swift riding

How Grane pants!

Rossweisse No Valkyrie's flight

Ever so fast was.

Ortlinde What lies on her saddle?

Melmwige That is no man!

Sugrune 'Tis a woman, see!

Gerhilde Where found she the maid?

Schwertleite Has she no greeting

For her sisters?

**CHaltraute Heiaha! Brünnhilde! **Calling down Dost thou not hear?

very loudly.

wood.

Ortlinde From her horse

Let us help our sister.

[Helmwige and Gerhilde run to the wood, followed by Siegrune and Rossweisse.

The Valkpries Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha!

Waltraute To earth has sunk

Looking into the wood. Grane the strong one!

Grimgerde From the saddle swift
She snatches the maid.

The other Sister! Sister!

What has occurred?

Running to the The Valkyries all return to

[The Valkyries all return to the stage; Brünnhilde accompanies them, leading and supporting Sieglinde.

Brünnhilde Breathless. Shield me and help In dire distress!

The Valkpries

Whence rodest thou hither,

Hasting so hard?

Thus ride they only who flee.

Brunnhilde

I flee for the first time And am pursued: Warfather follows close.

The Valkpries

Terribly alarmed.

Hast thou gone crazy? Speak to us! What? Pursued by Warfather? Flying from him?

Brünnhilde

Turns and looks out anxiously, then comes back. O sisters, spy

From the rocky peak! Look north and tell me If Warfather nears!

[Ortlinde and Waltraute spring up the peak to the look-out.

Quick! Is he in sight?

Ortlinde

A storm from the north Is nearing.

TRaltraute

Darkly the clouds Congregate there.

The Valkpries

Warfather, riding His sacred steed, comes !

Brunnhilde

The wrathful hunter,
He rides from the north;
He nears, he nears, in fury!
Save this woman!
Sisters your help!

Brünnhilde. "I flee for the first time And am pursued: Warfather follows close.

> He nears, he nears, in fury! Save this woman! Sisters, your help!"

> > See p. 138



The Valkyries

What threatens the woman?

Brunnhilde

Hark to me quickly! Sieglinde this is,

Siegmund's sister and bride.

Wotan his fury

Against the Wälsungs has turned.

He told me

That to-day I must fail The brother in strife; But with my shield I guarded him safe, Daring the God,

Who slew him himself with his spear.

Siegmund fell;
But I fled,
Bearing his bride.
To protect her
And from the stroke
Of his wrath to hide.

I hastened, O my sisters, to you!

The Valkyries
Full of fear.

O foolish sister,
How mad thy deed!
Woe's me! Woe's me!
Brünnhilde, lost one!
Mocked, disobeyed
By Brünnhilde

Warfather's holy command!

CHaltraute
On the look-out.

Darkness comes From the north like the night.

On the look-out.

Hither steering, Rages the storm.

Kossweisse, Grimgerde, and Zehwertleite

Welmwige, Gerhilde, and Ziegrune Brunnhilde Wildly neighs Warfather's horse!

Panting, snorting it comes!

Woe to the woman
If here she is found,
For Wotan has vowed
The Wälsungs shall perish!
The horse that is swiftest
Which of you lends,

That forth the woman may fly?

Siegrune

Wouldst have us too

Madly rebel?

Brunnhilde

Rossweisse, sister, Wilt lend me thy racer!

Rossmeisse

The fleet one from Wotan

Never yet fled.

Brünnhilde

Helmwige, hear me!

Welmwige

I flout not our father.

Brunnfilde

Waltraute! Gerhilde! Give me your horse! Schwertleite! Siegrune! See my distress!

Stand by me now

Because of our love:

Rescue this woman in woe!

Sieglinde

Who until now has been staring gloomily and coldly before her, starts up with a repellent gesture as Brünnhilde encircles her with a warm, protective embrace. Concern thyself not about me; Death is all that I crave.

From off the field Who bade thee thus bear me? For there perchance By the selfsame weapon That struck down Siegmund I too had died, Made one with him In the hour of death. Far from Siegmund-Siegmund, from thee! O cover me, Death, From the sorrow! Wouldst thou not have me Curse thee for flying?

Thou must hearken, maid, to my prayer: Pierce thou my heart with thy sword!

Brunnhilde Impressively.

Live for the sake Of thy love, O woman! Rescue the pledge Thou has gotten from him: The Wälsung's child thou shalt bear!

Bieglinde. Gives a violent flart; suddenly

her face beams with sublime joy. Save me, ye bold ones! Rescue my child! Shelter me, maidens, And strong be your shield!

> [An ever-darkening thundersform nears from th back.

Maltraute On the look-out.

The storm has drawn nigh.

Prtlinde.

Fly, all who fear it!

The Valkpries

Hence with the woman; Here she is lost: The Valkyries dare not Shield her from doom!

Sieglinde
On her knees
before Brünnhilde.

Save me, O maid! Rescue the mother!

Brünnhilbe Raises Sieglinde with sudden resolve. Away then, and swiftly!
Alone thou shalt fly.

I—stay in thy stead,
Victim of Wotan's anger.

I will hold here
The God in his wrath,

Till I know thee past reach of his rage.

Dieglinde

Say, whither shall my flight be?

Brünnhilde

Which of you, sisters, Eastward has journeyed?

Siegrune

A forest stretches
Far in the east;
The Nibelung's hoard
By Fafner thither was borne.

Schwertleite

There as a dread
Dragon he sojourns,
And in a cave
Keeps watch over Alberich's ring.

Grimgerde

'Tis uncanny there For a woman's home.

Brunnhilde

And yet from Wotan's wrath
Shelter sure were the wood;
For he both fears
And keeps far from the place.

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"There as a dread
Dragon he sojourns,
And in a cave
Keeps watch over Alberich's ring'
See p. 142



On the look-out.

Raging, Wotan Rides to the rock!

The Valkyries

Brünnhilde, hark!
Like a storm-wind he comes!

Brunnhilde Urgently. Flee then swiftly,
Thy face to the east!
Boldly enduring,
Defy every ill—
Hunger and thirst,
Briar and stone;
Laugh, whether gnawed
By anguish or want!
For one thing know
And hold to always—

The world's most glorious hero Hideth, O woman, thy sheltering womb!

> [She takes the pieces of Siegmund's sword from under her breast-plate and gives them to Sieglinde.

The splintered sword's pieces Guard securely;

From the field where slain was
His father I brought them.
And now I name
Him who one day
The sword new-welded shall swing—

"Siegfried" rejoice and prevail!

Sieglinde
Greatly moved.

Sublimest wonder!
Glorious maid!
From thee high solace
I have received!
For him whom we loved
I save the beloved one.
May my thanks one day

Sweet reward bring!
Fare thou well!
Be blest by Sieglind' in woe!

[She hastens away to the right in front. The rocky peak is surrounded by black thunder-clouds. A fearful storm rages from the back. A fiery glow increases in strength to the right.

EClotan's boice

Stay, Brünnhilde!

Ortlinde
and Chaltraute
Coming down
from the look out.

The rock is reached By horse and rider!

[Brünnhilde, after following Sieglinde with her eyes for a while, goes towards the hackground, looks into the wood, and comes forward again fearfully.

The Valkyries

Woe, Woe! Brünnhilde! Vengeance he brings!

Brünnhilde

Ah, sisters, help!
My courage fails!
His wrath will crush me
Unless ye ward off its weight.

The Walkyries

Fly towards the

rocky point in

fear, drawing

Brünnhilde with

them.

This way, then, lost one! Hide from his sight! Cling closely to us, And heed not his call!

[They hide Brünnhilde in their midft and look anxiously towards the wood, which is now ht up by a bright fiery glow, while in the background it has grown quite dark.

Woe! Woe! Raging, Wotan Swings from his horse! Hither hastes His foot for revenge!

Matan

Comes from the wood in a terrible state of wrath

Where is Brünnhilde?
Where is the guilty one?
Would ye defy me
And hide the rebel?

and excitement and goes towards the l'alkyries on the height, looking angrily for Brünnhilde.

The Valkyries

Fearful and loud thy rage is!

By what misdeed have thy daughters

Vexed and provoked thee

To terrible wrath?

Motan

Fools, would ye flout me? Have a care, rash ones! I know: Brünnhilde Fain ye would hide. Leave her, the lost one Cast off for ever, Even as she Cast off her worth!

The Valkpries

To us fled the pursued one,
In her need praying for help,
Dismayed and fearful,
Dreading thy wrath.
For our trembling sister
Humbly we beg
That thy first wild rage be calmed.

7 7Antan

Weak-hearted
And womanish brood!
Is this your valour,
Given by me?
For this have I reared you
Bold for the fight,
Made you relentless
And hard of heart

That we wild ones might weep and whine When my wrath on a faithless one falls?

> Learn, wretched whimperers, What was the crime Of her for whom Ye are shedding those tears. No one but she

Knew what most deeply I brooded; No one but she

Pierced to the source of my being: Through her deeds

All. I wished to be, came to birth. This sacred bond So completely she broke That she defied me, Opposing my will, Her master's command Openly mocked.

And against me pointed the spear That she held from me alone.

Hearest, Brünnhilde? Thou who didst hold Thy helm and spear, Grace and delight, Life and name as my gift! Hearing my voice thus accusing, Dost hide from me in terror.

A coward who shirks her doom?

Brunnhilde

Here I am, Father, Awaiting thy sentence! Steps out from the band of Valkyries, and humbly but with a firm step descends from the rocky peak until within a short distance from Wotan.

Mantan

I—sentence thee not; Thou hast shaped thy doom for thyself. Through my will only

Wert thou at all,

Yet against my will thou hast worked;

Thy part it was
To fulfil my commands,

Yet against me thou hast commanded;

Wish-maid

Thou wert to me,

Yet thy wish has dared to cross mine; Shield-maid

Thou wert to me,

Yet against me raised was thy shield;

Lot-chooser

Thou wert to me:

Against me the lot thou hast chosen;

Hero-rouser

Thou wert to me:

Thou hast roused up heroes against me.

What once thou wert Wotan has told thee:

What thou art now, Demand of thyself!

Wish-maid thou art no more;

Valkyrie thou art no longer :-

What now thou art For ave thou shalt be!

Brunnhilve Greatly terrified. Thou dost cast me off? Ah, can it be so?

Eletan

No more shall I send thee from Walhall

To seek upon fierce Fields for the slain; With heroes no more

Shalt thou fill my hall:

When the high Gods sit at banquet,

No more shalt thou pour The wine in my horn;

No more shall I kiss The mouth of my child. Among heaven's hosts Numbered no longer. Outcast art thou From the kinship of Gods: Our bond is broken in twain, And from my sight henceforth thou now art banned.

The Falkpries Leave their places

Woe's me! Woe! Sister! O sister! in the excitement, and come a little farther down the rocks.

Brunnhilde

All that thou gavest Thou dost recall?

7 Hotan

Conquering thee, one shall take all! For here on the rock Bound thou shalt be. Defenceless in sleep, Charmed and enchained; The man who chances this way And awakes her, shall master the maid.

The Palkyries Come down from the height in great excitement, and in terrified groups surround Brunnhilde, who lies half kneeling

before Wotan.

O stay, Father! The sentence recall. Shall the maiden droop And be withered by man? O dread one, avert thou The crying disgrace: For as sisters share we her shame.

Ellotan

Have ye not heard Wotan's decree? From out your band Shall your traitorous sister be banished, No more to ride

The ride of the Valkyries See p. 149



Through the clouds her swift steed to the battle:

Her maidenhood's flower
Will fade away;
Her grace and her favour
Her husband's will be;
Her husband will rule her
And she will obey;

Beside the hearth she will spin, To all mockers a mark for scorn.

> [Brünnhilde sinks with a cry to the ground. The Valkyries, horror-stricken, recoil from her violently.

Fear ye her fate?
Then fly from the lost one!
Swiftly forsake
And flee from her far!
Let one but venture
Near her to linger,
Seek to befriend her,
Defying my will—

The fool shall share the same doom: I warn you, ye bold ones, well!

Up and away!
Hence, and return not!
Get ye gone at a gallop,
Trouble is rife else for you here!

The Valkpries

Separate with a wild cry and rush into the wood.

Woe! Woe!

[Black clouds settle thickly on the cliff; a ru/hing sound is heard in the wood. From the clouds breaks a vivid flash of lightning, by which the Valkyries are seen packed closely together, and riding wildly away with loose bridles. The storm soon subsides; the thunder-clouds gradually disperse. In the following scene the weather becomes fine again and twilight falls, followed at the close by night.

Wotan and Brünnhilde, who lies stretched at his feet, remain behind alone.

A long solemn silence.

Brünnhilde

Begins to raise her head a little, and, commencing timidly, gains confidence as she proceeds. Was the offence

So shameful and foul

That to such shame the offender should be

doomed?

Was what I did
So base and so vile

That I must suffer abasement so low?

Was the dishonour Truly so deep

That it must rob me of honour for aye?

[She raises herself gradually to a kneeling posture.

O speak, Father!
In my eye looking,
Calming thy rage,
Taming thy wrath,
Explain why so dark
This deed of mine

That in thy implacable anger It costs thee thy favourite child!

Matan

Ask of thy deed,

His attitude And that will show thee thy guilt I unchanged, gravely and gloomily.

Brunnhilde

I but fulfilled

Wotan's command.

EElotan

By my command

Didst thou fight for the Wälsung?

Brunnhilde

Yea, lord of the lots, So ran thy decree.

22Hotan

But I took back The order, changed the decree I

Brünnhilde

When Fricka had weaned Thy will from its purpose: In yielding what she desired Thou wert a foe to thyself.

Motan

I thought thou didst understand me. Softly and bitterly. And punished thy conscious revolt:

But coward and fool I seemed to thee! If I had not treason to punish Thou wouldst be unworthy my wrath.

Brunnhilde

I am not wise, But I knew well this one thing-That thy love was the Wälsung's: I knew that, by discord Drawn two ways,

This one thing thou hadst forgotten. The other only Couldst thou discern-

What so bitterly Wounded thy heart:

That Siegmund might not be shielded.

Motan

And yet thou didst dare To shield him, knowing 'twas so?

Brunnhilde Beginning softly.

Because I the one thing Had kept in my eye, While by twofold desire Divided wert thou,

Blindly thy back on him turning! She who wards thy back From the foe in the field,

She saw alone
What thou sawest not:
Siegmund I beheld.

Bringing him doom
I approached;
I looked in his eyes,
Gave ear to his words.
I perceived the hero's
Bitter distress;
Loud the lament
Of the brave one resounded;
Uttermost love's
Most terrible pang,
Saddest of hearts
Defying all odds—
With my ear I heard,
My eye beheld

That which stirred the heart in my breast With trouble holy and strange.

Shamed, astonished,
Shrinking I stood.
Then all my thought
Was how I could serve him;
Triumph and death
To share with Siegmund—
That seemed, that only,
The lot I could choose!
Faithful to him
Who taught my heart this love,
And set me

By the Wälsung's side as friend—Most faithful to him—Thy word I disobeyed.

Motan

So thou hast done
What I yearned so greatly to do—

What a twofold fate Withheld from my desire! So easy seemed to thee Heart's delight in the winning. When burning woe In my heart flamed fierce. When terrible anguish Wrung my soul, When, to save the world That I loved, love's spring In my tortured heart I imprisoned? Against my own self When I turned, to my torment, From swooning pain Arose in a frenzy, When a wild longing Burning like fire The fearful design in me woke In the ruins of my own world My unending sorrow to bury,

[Somewhat freely.

Thy heart was lapped
In blissful delight.
Trembling with rapture,
Drunken with joy,
Thy lips drank laughing
The draught of love,
While I drank of divine woe
Mixed with wormwood and gall.

[Dryly and shortly. ghtsome heart

By thy lightsome heart
Henceforth be guided:
From me thou hast turned away!
I must renounce thee;
Together no more
Shall we two whisper counsel;

Apart our paths lie,
Sundered for ever,
And so long as life lasts
I, the God, dare nevermore greet thee!

Brünnhilde Simply.

Unfit was the foolish Maid for thee, Who, dazed by thy counsel. Grasped not thy mind When, to her, one counsel Alone appeared plain-To love what was loved by thee. If I must forth Where I shall not find thee, If the fast-woven bond Must be loosed, And half thy being Far from thee banished-A half once thine and thine only. O God, forget not that !-Thy other self Thou wilt not dishonour. Dealing out shame That will shame thee too: Thine own honour were lowered. Were I a target for scorn!

Malatan

The lure of love
Thou hast followed fain:
Follow the man
Who shall wield its might!

Brunnhilde

If I must go from Walhall,
No more in thy work be a sharer,
And if as my master
A man I must serve,
To braggart base

Abandon me not!
Not all unworthy
Be he who wins!

With Wotan no part hast thou—

He cannot fashion thy fate.

Brünnhilde By thee has been founded a race

Too glorious to bring forth a coward;

One day must a matchless hero From Wälsung lineage spring.

Name not the Wälsungs to me!

Renouncing thee,

Them too I renounced:

Through envy they came to naught.

Brünnhilde She who turned from thee

Rescued the race;

[With an air of secrecy.

Sieglinde bears

Fruit holy and high;

In pain and woe

Beyond woe known to woman

She will bring forth

What in fear she hides!

Western No shelter for her

Seek at my hand,

Nor for fruit that she may bear.

Brünnhilde The sword she has kept

That thou gavest Siegmund.

Whotan And that I splintered with my spear.

Violently. Strive not. O maid.

Strive not, O maid, My spirit to trouble! Await thou the lot

Cast and decreed;

I cannot choose it or change!
But now I must forth,
Fare from thee far;
Too long I stay by thy side.
I must turn from thee,
As thou didst from me;
I must not even
Know thy desire;
Thy doom alone
I must see fulfilled!

Brunnhilde

And what is the doom That I must suffer?

If fettering sleep

Matan

In slumber fast
Thou shalt be locked;
Wife thou shalt be to the man
Who finds and wakes thee from sleep!

Brünnhilde Falls on her knees.

Fast must bind me,
An easy prey
To the basest coward,
This one thing that in deep anguish
I plead for thou must accord!
O shield thou the sleeper
With soul-daunting terrors,
[Firmly.

That by a dauntless Hero alone Here on the rock I may be found!

Matan

Too much thou askest— Too big a boon!

Brünnhilde Clasping his knees. This one thing Grant me, O grant me!

Wotan. "Appear, flickering fire,
Encircle the rock with thy flame!
Loge! Loge! Appear!"
Sec p. 159



The child that is clasping
Thy knees crush dead;
Tread down thy dear one
And shatter the maid;
Let her body perish,
Pierced by thy spear,
But, cruel one, expose her not
To this crying shame!

[With wild ecstasy.

O cause a fire
To burn at thy bidding,
With flame fiercely flaring
Girdle the rock,
And may its tongue lick,
And may its tooth eat
The coward who, daring, rashly
Approaches the terrible spot!

Matan

Overcome and deeply stirred, turns quickly towards Brünn-hilde, raises her from her knees and looks into her eyes with emotion.

Farewell, thou valiant,
Glorious child!
Thou the most holy
Pride of my heart,
Farewell! Farewell!

[Paffionately.

Must we be parted?

Shall I never more

Give thee love's greeting?

Must thou no longer

Gallop beside me,

Nor bring me mead at banquet?

If I must lose thee,

Whom I have loved so,

The laughing delight of my eyes,

For thee there shall burn

A bridal fire brighter

Than ever yet burned for a bride!

Fiercely the flames
Shall flare round thy bed,
Flames dreadful, devouring,
Daunting all cowards;
Let cravens flee
From Brünnhilde's rock!
One only shall set the bride free,
One freer than I, the God!

[Moved and enraptured, Brunhilde sinks on the breast of Wotan, who holds her in a long embrace; then she throws back her head again, and, still embracing him, gazes into his eyes with emotion and awe.

Those eyes so lovely and bright That oft with smiles I caressed,

Thy valour
With a kiss rewarding
When, sweetly lisped
By thy childlike mouth,

The praise of heroes I heard: Those eyes so radiant and fair That oft in storm on me shone.

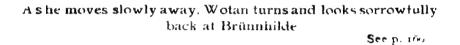
> When hopeless yearning My heart was wasting, And when the joy Of the world I longed for,

While fears thronged thick around me-

Once more to-day
Gladdening me,
Let them take this kiss
Of fond farewell!
On happier mortal
May they yet shine;

On me, hapless immortal, Must they close, and for ever!

[He takes her head in both hands.





'Tis thus that the God From thee turns: He kisses thy Godhead away!

[He kisses her long on the eyes, and with these closed she sinks back softly into his arms, unconscious. He carries her gently to a low mossy mound, and lays her there beneath the broad-spreading pine-tree which overshadows it. He gazes at her and closes her helmet; his eyes then rest on the form of the sleeper, which he completely covers with the great sield of the Valkyries. Having done so, he moves slowly away, turning to take one more sorrowful look. Then he strides with solemn resolve to the middle of the stage, and points his sword towards a large rock.

Loge, hear!
Hark to my word!
I who found thee at first
A fiery flame,
And from whom thou didst vanish
In wandering fire,
I, who once bound,
Bid thee break forth!
Appear, flickering fire,
Encircle the rock with thy flame!

[H. strikes the rock three times with his spear during the following.

Loge! Loge! Appear!

[A gleam of fire issues from the stone and gradually becomes a fiery glow; then slickering flames break forth. Soon wild, shooting flames surround Wotan, who, with his spear, directs the sea of fire to encircle the rock. It spreads towards the background, so that the mountain is surrounded by flame.

Let none who fears The spear of Wotan Adventure across this fire!

[He stretches out his spear as a ban, looks sorrowfully back at Brünnhilde, then moves slowly away, turning his head for a farewell gaze. Finally he disappears through the fire. The curtain falls.



The sleep of Brünnhilde See p. 159

